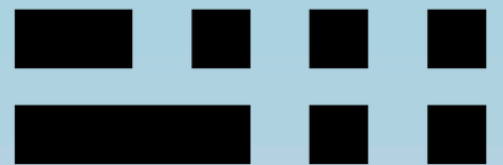




# CLIMATE EMOTIONS PROGRAM

2024 Report



BREAK THE DIVIDE





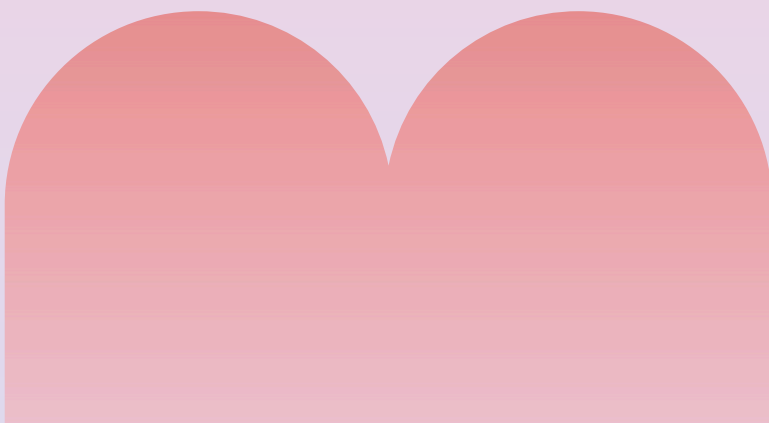
# ABOUT BTD

As the world confronts the repercussions of the climate crisis, marked by events such as record-setting heat waves, wildfires, flooding, and melting sea ice, an increasing number of people are experiencing a correlated rise in mental health challenges. Young people, in particular, often experience emotions of anxiety, fear, helplessness, and other intense feelings that match the scale of the climate crisis.

At Break The Divide, we believe connection is a crucial element of climate action.

Our programming equips young people with resources to understand their climate emotions and connects communities with one another to build resilience and share knowledge amidst the climate crisis.

We create pathways for young people to build empathy for realities that they have never faced and empower them to transform that empathy into concrete actions that advance the creation of harmonious and abundant futures.



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Climate Emotions Connection Program (CECP) by Break The Divide was established to address the mental health impacts of climate change on high school students across Canada, with a particular focus on teaching students how to navigate their eco-anxiety and complex climate emotions. Recognizing that many existing solutions to climate mental health challenges are solely individualistic, CECP provides a novel approach by empowering youth to transform climate-related anxieties into collective action through connection and dialogue. This program enabled students to share their personal and community experiences and collaborate on climate action, fostering emotional resilience and creating a sense of community, which are key to collectively addressing the climate crisis.

Our Climate Emotions Connection Program was developed in collaboration with mental health professionals, educators, students, and environmental experts. It also provided mental health support and educational resources to empower youth in processing their climate emotions. The first cohort reached over 200 students from 12 schools in 3 provinces in Canada (Ontario, Nova Scotia, British Columbia), facilitated by 13 trained volunteers in climate dialogue. Through these interactions, youth gained new terminology to express their emotions and were encouraged to take climate action in their local communities.

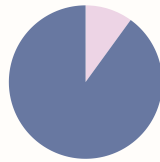
## Key components of CECP:

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**synchronous virtual connection** where students from different schools across the country, were paired together to engage in deeper discussions about these topics (shared environmental identity, navigating climate emotions, art as a form of climate action), as well as their shared climate-related concerns.

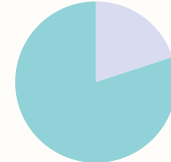
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**asynchronous learning sessions** where educators guided students through lesson plans on climate emotions, environmental identity, and pathways to climate action.



90%

of student participants reported finding the program helpful in understanding and navigating climate emotions.



80%

of participants acknowledged how collaboration increases climate resilience.

## Quotes from educators and youth volunteers:

"I feel like I was simultaneously able to work on my own skills and contribute to the learning of students across the country. I also feel like we really got the students thinking which was remarkable to see. It's not often that young students have the chance to dive into how their community and climate change intersect. I really feel like we added to their curriculums!"

**Emma Brooks, Volunteer,  
British Columbia**

"I think the students appreciated the collaboration with another school and understanding the geography and perspectives of another province. The sessions were well moderated."

**Teacher, Nova Scotia**

For the first time, students were able to recognize and identify certain emotions that go hand-in-hand with climate change that they haven't thought of before"

**Meagan O'Donoghue, Teacher,  
Ontario**

## Future directions

The next steps for the CECP involve scaling up the program to reach more high schools across Canada, improving its delivery and resources, and supporting an even larger cohort of youth in their climate justice pursuits.



"I definitely recommend this program to other teachers, schools, and classrooms that really want to take more initiative in climate action change - there were a lot of resources and there were tons of links to different organizations, local organizations as well that would really inspire students to think about realistic and very practical ways of taking action to combat climate change"

**Teacher, Ontario**

# MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

## Message from the Executive Director

Break The Divide began as a high school project connecting my high school on the West Coast of Canada with a high school in an Arctic town with a population of 3000. As students from our schools talked to one another over Skype calls, we quickly learned that we had a lot in common. From shared interests and passions to common anxieties and concerns for the world, we bonded by talking about our communities. Through this process of conversation, my peers and I learned about the transformative power of conversation and connection to promote empathy and understanding. As we talked about the local impacts of climate change in our own communities, we felt seen and validated in ways that we didn't even know we needed. There had never previously been a space to talk about our emotions related to the scale of the climate crisis. We soon began to understand how our communities drew strength and inspiration from the unique characteristics of the places and people we called home.

In the 7 years since starting Break The Divide, I built a team of youth volunteers across Canada, connected with high school students from 8 different countries, and learned from leading climate scientists, mental health professionals, and community-building experts. Through this process, my understanding of the challenges my community of young people face became clearer every day.

It was a dream come true to run the Climate Emotions Program in 14 schools across Canada in 2024. I was consistently inspired by seeing the ways youth participants articulated their connections to their communities and shared their complex emotions about the climate crisis.

Running the Climate Emotions Program in 2024 was almost a decade of work in action.

I am incredibly grateful to all the supporters, mentors, and friends who have supported BTM through this journey. In 2023, Tariq Harney joined the team as a Director of Operations, supporting the building of a foundational vision that guides our work today. In 2024, Aria Kani joined our team, first as a volunteer and then as our first-ever full-time paid staff as a Program Manager for the Climate Emotions Program. I am grateful for my team's support and leadership.

I also want to thank FES (Foundation of Environmental Stewardship) and its leadership team of Kat Cadungog and Julie Dunleavy for their financial support, mentorship, and innovative funding model that provides opportunities to youth organizations like Break The Divide. Lastly, thank you to all volunteers, partners, teachers, and students for being such a critical part of the program. As I reflect back on the journey of the Climate Emotions Program in 2024, I am incredibly excited for all that is to come. Join us as we build more resilient, connected, and empowered communities.

Sincerely,



Abhay Singh Sachal (he/him)  
**Founder and Executive Director, Break The Divide**



## Message from the Program Manager, Aria Kani

"It is my absolute pleasure to present Break The Divide's first Climate Emotions Connection Program report and to reflect on the accomplishments, challenges, and growth the program has experienced during its first cohort.

At Break The Divide, our team has devoted countless hours of thoughtful discussion and collaboration to create a program that fills the void we, as young people, felt during our own high school years. Our aim was to address the emotional impact of climate change, promote connections between youth, and provide hope for the future.

I hope that, as we continue refining CECP, it grows into a program that maximizes its positive impact on youth, ultimately reaching a global scale! I envision CECP becoming an essential tool in helping young people cope with the climate crisis and finding comfort in their collective efforts.

I want to sincerely thank our sponsors, particularly FES, for their unwavering belief in young people's visions. I deeply respect the work that they are doing and feel grateful that we had a chance to get a step closer to fulfilling our vision. A heartfelt thank-you also goes out to my colleagues, Abhay Sachal and Tariq Harney, for trusting me with managing this program and helping to build it from the ground up. I am also deeply grateful to our dedicated volunteers, whose belief in our vision and reliability made this program possible.

Thank you for connecting with us - each and every single one of you made the program that much more special. Lastly, a special thank you to the schools, teachers, and students who participated in the program's first cohort. It has been an honour to have you all on board, and we look forward to welcoming you back in future (hopefully improved) iterations!

To all of you reading this report, thank you for taking the time to learn more about Break The Divide's work. I hope it inspires you to join us in the fight for climate justice - in whichever capacity you hold." With love,

Aria Kani (she/her)  
**Program Manager, Break The Divide**





“The biggest strength of this program was the opportunity for community building. And the opportunity to bring visibility to an important issue that many school-aged kids are already well aware, and ensure they have tools to understand climate change and to better manage emotions that surround it.”

**Sydney Bartos, Volunteer, Ontario**

# ABOUT US

## Organization Overview: Mission, Vision, and Values

### Mission

Break The Divide is an international non-profit organization that empowers young people to navigate the emotional challenges of the climate crisis by fostering connection, empathy, and community engagement. Through safe spaces for dialogue and cross-community collaboration, we equip youth to transform climate emotions into meaningful action and build resilient, inclusive futures.

### Vision

We envision a world where young people are emotionally resilient, empowered by connection, and inspired to transform climate anxiety into collective action. Through fostering empathy, dialogue, and community engagement, Break The Divide strives to create a future where youth lead with courage, building bridges across communities to shape sustainable and abundant futures! We envision a just and sustainable world where youth feel supported, empowered, and connected to achieve their hopes and dreams.

### Values

The core values guiding our work are connection, authenticity, community, climate justice, and emotions.

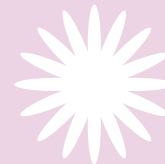
## Background on Climate Emotions

Break The Divide became involved in addressing climate emotions after recognizing the widespread anxiety and grief many young people experience due to the climate crisis. We sought to create a space where these emotions could be discussed, shared and transformed into actionable hope.



92%

of teachers rated the Climate Emotions Program as **easy to implement in their classrooms.**



100%

agreed that the program was a **worthwhile investment** of class time.

## Team Introduction

### **Abhay Singh Sachal** **(Executive Director)**

Abhay is a 23-year-old Canadian changemaker passionate about climate action, mental health, and spirituality. He founded Break The Divide in 2017 to connect Arctic communities impacted by climate change with his hometown of Surrey, BC. Now leading the organization, he drives strategy, fundraising, and partnerships while motivating an incredible team. Abhay also serves on national and international climate councils and is pursuing a Master's in Educational Psychology. A lifelong hockey player, pianist, and speaker, he believes empathy is at the heart of change.



### **Aria Kani** **(Program Manager)**

Aria, a University of Toronto graduate from Kazakhstan, is a powerhouse in climate justice and mental health advocacy. She leads Break The Divide's programs, manages partnerships, and ensures smooth operations. Passionate about supporting youth and marginalized communities, she recently spoke at Canada's first Environmental Justice and Racism Symposium. With her intersectional perspective and leadership, Aria is dedicated to building a just and sustainable future.

### **Tariq Harney** **(Director of Operations)**

Tariq, a 23-year-old climate activist and Master's student in Anthropology, oversees operations, communications, and program development at Break The Divide. A clarinetist and hockey enthusiast, he values creative expression and teamwork in fostering community resilience. From grant writing to social media, Tariq keeps everything running smoothly—while also perfecting his pasta recipes!

[READ FULL BIOS HERE](#)

# THEORY OF CHANGE

## Goals & Objectives:



**Connect youth across Canada** to foster empathy and collaboration in facing the climate crisis.



**Empower students** to take local climate action and gain hope for the future.



**Build emotional resilience** and advocate for climate mental health by equipping youth with tools to navigate climate-related emotions.



**Inspire youth** to become leaders in their communities, taking action toward climate justice and other causes they are passionate about.

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## Strategic Approach

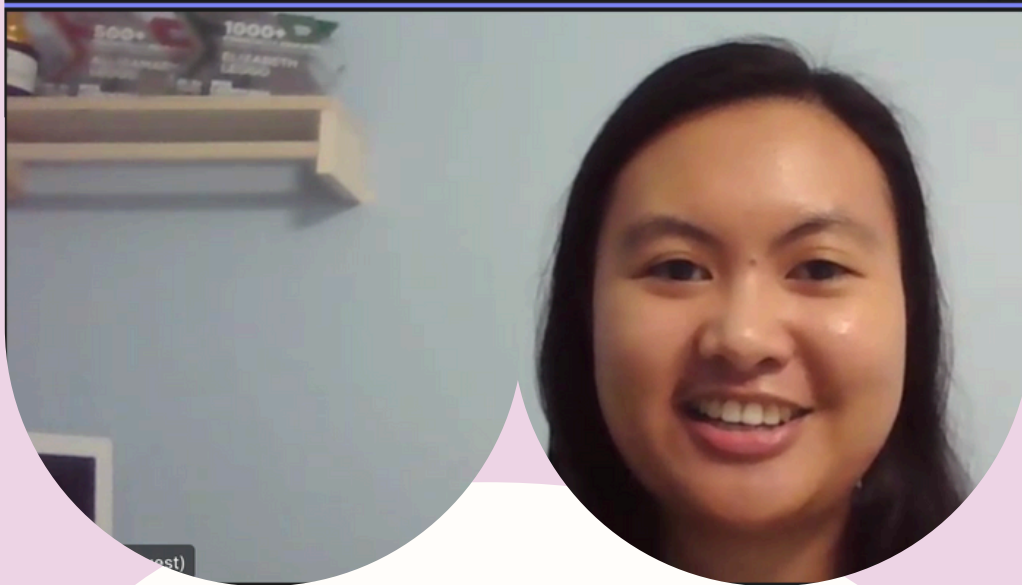
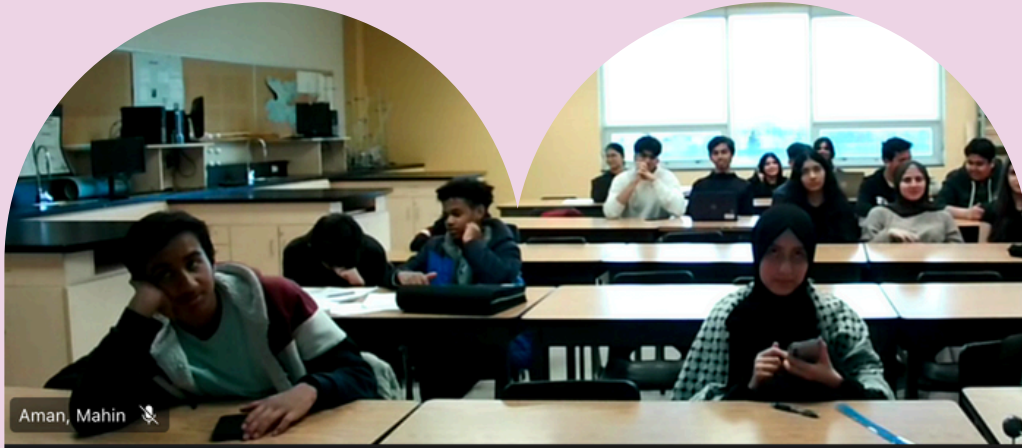
- Learning sessions provide knowledge on climate emotions, environmental identity, and mental health.
- Peer support: students are able to engage with trained volunteers who represent young people across Canada who have faced similar challenges and continue to work or volunteer in the climate sphere. They are able to address some of the students' concerns and lead by example, as well as create a safe space and provide needed emotional support.
- Connection sessions enable youth to engage with peers from different regions, fostering deep, meaningful dialogue.
- Resources provided: Lesson plans, discussion guides, and climate action support are all accessible through a well-organized online platform for teachers and students to access at any time.

**90%**

of volunteers described their experience working with Break The Divide as **highly positive.**

**90%**

found the volunteer onboarding process **quick and straightforward.**



"As a high school student, it can be overwhelming and exhausting to process your emotions while feeling isolated and hopeless when confronting the climate crisis. That's why programs like Break The Divide's Climate Emotions are so important."

**Student, Grade 10, British Columbia**

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## Program Design

The CECP is a **free, 4-month virtual program** connecting high school students across Canada to discuss climate change and mental health. It comprises **7 hybrid sessions (three asynchronous and four synchronous virtual sessions)**, covering various climate-related themes such as environmental identity, community-building, climate emotions, and pathways to action. Each session is facilitated by a Break The Divide team member, with resources provided to educators and students in easily accessible formats.

## Target Audience

The program serves high school students and educators in Canada, helping to build connections between diverse communities while focusing on emotional well-being and climate action.

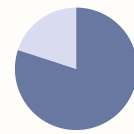
## Session Themes for the First Cohort

- 1 Introduction to Environmental Identity
- 2 Shared Environmental Identity
- 3 Introduction to Climate Emotions
- 4 Navigating Your Climate Emotions
- 5 Climate Emotions & Art
- 6 Working Toward Climate Action
- 7 Reflection & Conclusion



100%

**enjoyed their participation** in the Climate Emotions Program.



80%

reported **gaining new knowledge** about the diverse experiences of communities across Canada.

# Climate Dialogue Facilitator Training

The program sessions were supported by a dedicated group of volunteers, who were recruited, onboarded, and trained by the Break The Divide team. Volunteer training was conducted through a synchronous two-hour Zoom training session (the recording of the training session was shared with participants afterward) that covered essential themes to prepare facilitators for leading meaningful discussions on climate emotions.

A total of 14 volunteers successfully completed the dialogue facilitation training, which equipped them with the skills to create supportive, inclusive, and engaging spaces. The training covered the following key areas:



## Code of Conduct

Setting clear expectations for behaviour to maintain a respectful and collaborative environment.



## Facilitating Safe Spaces

Techniques for fostering authenticity, trust, and open sharing among participants.



## Conflict Resolution in Virtual Settings

Strategies for managing and resolving conflicts effectively in online environments.



## Addressing Discrimination and Micro-Aggressions

Guidance on identifying and responding to harmful behaviour.



## Handling Insensitive Remarks and Reporting

Tools for addressing inappropriate comments and escalating unacceptable behaviour when necessary.



## Cultural Sensitivity Training

Building awareness and understanding of diverse cultural perspectives and experiences.



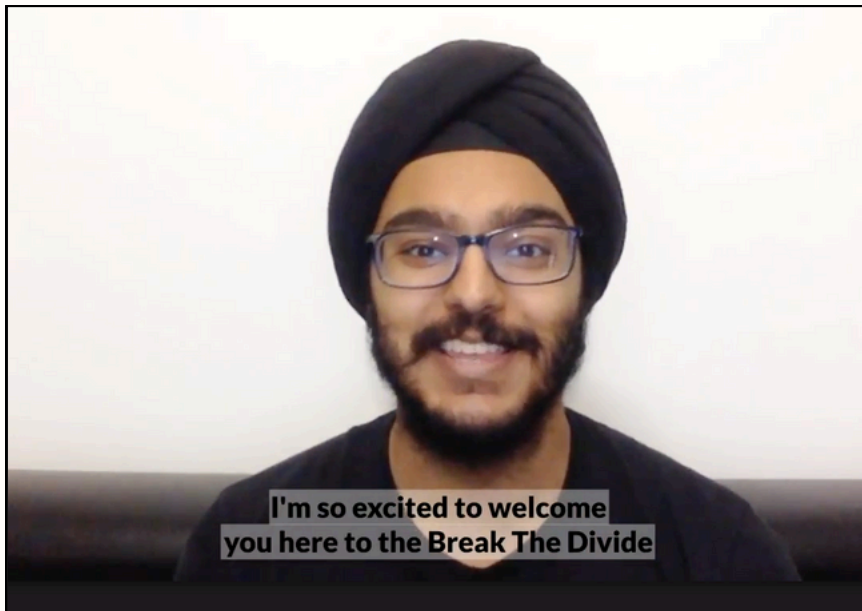
## Interactive Scenarios

Practice-based activities to prepare facilitators for navigating challenging situations and engaging with participants constructively.

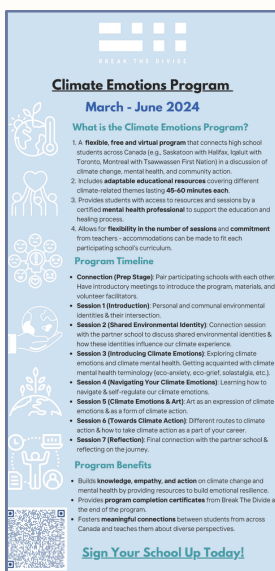
This comprehensive training ensured that facilitators were well-prepared to lead dialogues on the often-complex emotions surrounding climate issues, creating a safe and empowering space for all of our student participants.

# Curriculum & Content

Students engaged in discussions, art creation, and knowledge-sharing around climate emotions. Materials included lesson plans, PDF and video resources, and group activities aimed at fostering both individual and collective reflection.



Program Intro Video



Infographic



Campaign Overview





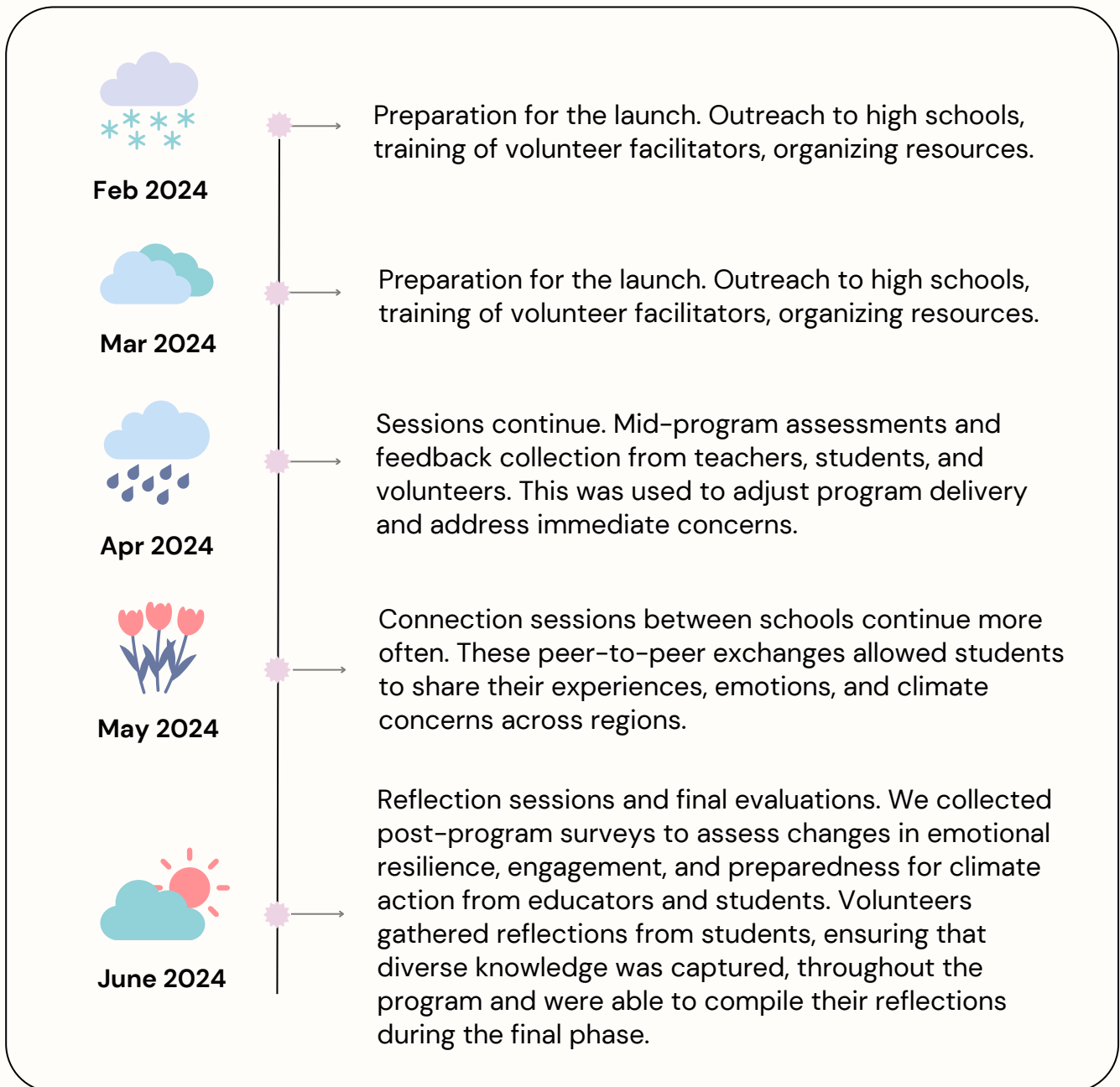
"I teach a psychology class and for the first time, students were able to recognize and identify certain emotions that go hand-in-hand with climate change that they haven't thought of before. [...] They also really enjoyed the artistic components that were included in the course"

**Teacher, Ontario**

# PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The **Climate Emotions Connection Program** was carried out between **March and June 2024**, connecting youth across various schools to discuss the emotional impact of climate change and foster resilience through peer-to-peer interactions.

This was the pilot run of the program, and though it was met with significant challenges, we implemented several solutions that allowed us to deliver on key objectives. Below is a comprehensive overview of the program's implementation, challenges faced, and solutions.



## Challenges Faced

Despite extensive planning, the first run of the Climate Emotions Connection Program encountered several notable challenges. These challenges stemmed from the logistical complexities of running a hybrid program, recruitment difficulties that are associated with high schools, and the novelty of running this type of program. Here is a detailed breakdown of these challenges:

Challenge	Description	Impact
<b>Lack of Experience</b>	This was the first iteration of the program, requiring us to create all materials, processes, and frameworks from scratch. With no established template, we encountered significant trial-and-error moments, though we were able to pivot and learn from these moments.	Program planning and execution took more time than expected. There was also a steeper learning curve for volunteers and teachers to understand and implement the program structure effectively. We were originally planning to launch in February and finish the program in May but the timeline got pushed back by a month due to the learning curve.
<b>Recruitment Difficulties</b>	Attracting enough schools to participate proved challenging, even after extensive outreach efforts through various partnerships and school networks. Convincing schools to integrate a new, non-traditional program into their already packed schedules was difficult - many teachers already have their hands full with the existing curriculum.	The initial target for school participation was not met. We had to adjust the number of peer connection sessions to match available school partners.
<b>Curriculum Constraints</b>	School curriculums were rigid, and we faced resistance from administrations that had concerns about fitting the program into their tight schedules.	Some schools were hesitant or unable to commit fully to the program, limiting the depth of engagement and frequency of connection sessions.

Challenge	Description	Impact
<b>Teacher Engagement</b>	While we relied on teachers to be the point of contact, several of them disengaged over time, dropping out or becoming unresponsive, especially close to the connection sessions.	This resulted in last-minute cancellations or incomplete participation by some schools, negatively impacting the consistency of peer-to-peer discussions.
<b>Student Engagement</b>	Gaining access to students was primarily through teachers, which restricted our ability to communicate directly with students, as many schools have privacy policies for students. Additionally, engaging students outside of scheduled sessions and outside of school hours (such as on Discord) proved difficult, resulting in low participation rates.	The inability to directly engage students led to lower overall student participation in extra-curricular activities, hindering the full potential of community building and resource sharing.
<b>Logistical Realities vs. Expectations</b>	Coordinating between schools to schedule connection sessions was far more complex than anticipated. Schools operated on different timetables, some with varying access to technology. For example, some schools only had access to one laptop for the whole class during a session, creating limitations in interaction and student reach.	Scheduling delays, reduced participation quality, and logistical issues made the running of sessions not as smooth as hoped for and limited opportunities for meaningful engagement.
<b>Diverse Knowledge Sharing</b>	Overall, capturing and storing diverse perspectives from students proved challenging due to students' varying comfort levels with sharing, differences in technology setups, time constraints, and the situational dynamics of each class.	A complete, uniform repository of student experiences and reflections could not be created, affecting the program's goal of capturing diverse knowledge and emotional perspectives from students across regions.

## Solutions Implemented & Lessons Learned

To address these challenges, we implemented a series of strategies that helped us adapt the program in real time and mitigate some of the obstacles that arose. The following solutions were key to navigating the difficulties and ensuring that the program still achieved its primary goals to the best of its ability:

Challenge	Description	Outcome
<b>Leveraging Personal Networks</b>	We reached out to our personal and professional networks to recruit more schools and tailor the program to meet their specific needs. By using direct connections, we were able to recruit additional schools and address their specific concerns about the program.	This helped us increase participation and ensure that the program fit better within the schedules and preferences of the schools that joined. It also made us reflect on the level of flexibility required for a program like this to be widely implemented, which we are adapting for the new cohort.
<b>Flexible Participation Options</b>	We offered schools greater flexibility by allowing them to choose how many sessions they wanted to participate in, rather than requiring full participation across all planned activities. The only mandatory component was carrying out at least one peer connection session.	Schools that initially hesitated to join due to time constraints found this flexibility helpful and were more willing to participate, though at reduced capacity.
<b>Proactive Teacher Engagement</b>	To engage teachers more effectively, we scheduled immediate meetings with those who expressed interest. These personal touchpoints allowed us to address any concerns early on, making the program feel more accessible and less burdensome for them.	Teachers who participated in these meetings felt more supported, which reduced the likelihood of them disengaging or dropping out close to connection sessions.

Challenge	Description	Outcome
<p><b>Individual Connection Sessions</b></p>	<p>When matching schedules between schools proved too difficult, we pivoted to offering individual connection/reflection sessions. In these sessions, classes would reflect on the program content with volunteers rather than connecting with another school. This adaptation was made to maintain student engagement without relying solely on cross-school coordination.</p>	<p>This solution allowed us to keep students engaged even when school schedules didn't align, providing opportunities for meaningful reflection and discussion in smaller, more manageable settings.</p>
<p><b>Targeted Engagement with Committed Schools</b></p>	<p>We refocused our efforts on schools and teachers who showed genuine interest and commitment to the program. Rather than trying to force participation, we directed resources toward schools that were more aligned with our goals. For future iterations, we are considering introducing a small participation fee to further ensure commitment.</p>	<p>This focus on quality over quantity helped improve engagement rates and made the program easier to manage logistically. It also made us reflect on who we want to serve and how we want to serve them, making meaningful change, no matter how big or small, our primary focus.</p>
<p><b>Diverse Knowledge Sharing Through Volunteers</b></p>	<p>To address the challenge of capturing diverse perspectives, volunteers took an active role in sharing their own reflections and personal climate experiences, creating a more open and comfortable environment for students to share. Additionally, volunteers documented the reflections and insights of students, ensuring that knowledge was captured even when students were less forthcoming.</p>	<p>This approach helped create a safer space for students to share, leading to richer discussions and more meaningful exchanges of perspectives, even in cases where students were initially hesitant.</p>

By implementing these solutions, we were able to adapt to the unexpected challenges and deliver a program that, while not perfect, still provided significant value to the students and teachers involved. These lessons will inform future iterations of the program, helping us to further refine the model and scale its impact.



"I really believe in this project and would have wanted it when I was young, it hit close to home for me and it was really beautiful to be in the facilitator-mentor role for something so personal."

**Julia Sterling, Volunteer, Ontario**

# PROGRAM BUDGET

The Climate Emotions Program was developed and implemented with a budget of \$24,000 CAD, generously awarded to Break The Divide through the **Youth Harbour Program** by the **FES (Finance Engage Sustain)** initiative. This funding was instrumental in supporting key components of the program, including resource development, volunteer training, outreach, and the creation of a safe and inclusive space for youth to explore climate-related emotions.

The budget allocation was thoughtfully planned to ensure maximum impact, with a focus on areas such as:



## Program Materials and Resources

Development of educational content, workbooks, and session guides tailored to the unique needs of youth participants.



## Volunteer and Staff Support

Training sessions for facilitators and program coordinators to ensure alignment with program goals and equity principles.



## Outreach and Recruitment

Engaging high schools and community organizations to promote the program and recruit participants.



## Workshops and Connection Sessions

Organizing and delivering impactful sessions to foster emotional resilience and community among participants.

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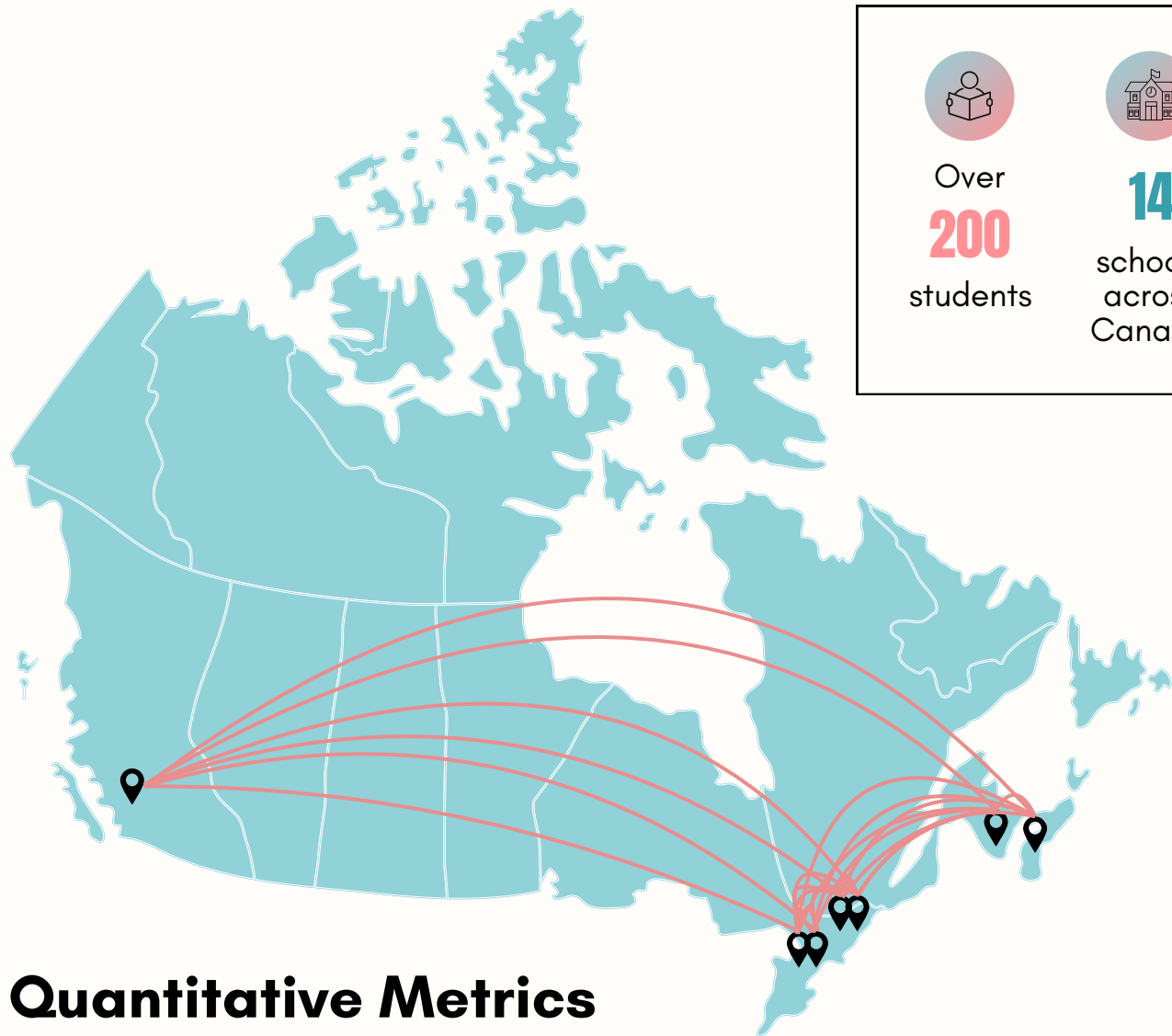
The funding also facilitated the development of feedback mechanisms to evaluate the program's success and identify areas for future improvement. Break The Divide is deeply grateful to FES for its support, which has made it possible to deliver meaningful and transformative experiences for youth grappling with the emotional dimensions of climate change.



"Before this program, I felt so lost and scared about the future. Now, I see that we can use these emotions to connect and create change."

**Student, Grade 11, Ontario**

# IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Over **200** students

**14** schools across Canada

## Quantitative Metrics

### Participant Reach

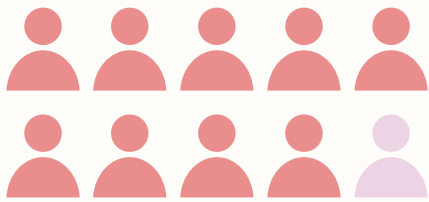
- Over **200 students** from **14 schools** across Canada participated in the program, spanning provinces such as Ontario, Nova Scotia, and British Columbia.
- Resources were shared across all participating schools, facilitating equitable access.

### Engagement Levels

- **11 synchronous connection sessions** were facilitated by trained volunteers, enabling meaningful cross-provincial dialogue (e.g., connecting students in Nova Scotia with those in Ontario).
- **6 classrooms** engaged consistently throughout the program.
- Resources directly reached more than **200 students**.

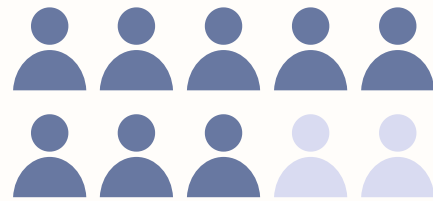
# Measurable Outcomes (from pre- and post-program surveys)

## Student Feedback



90%

of student participants reported finding the program **helpful in understanding and navigating climate emotions.**



80%

of participants **acknowledged how collaboration increases climate resilience.**

3X

The number of students able to identify, explain, and navigate the emotional impact of the climate crisis tripled after the program.

2X

More than twice as many students reported understanding how the climate crisis impacts various communities differently.

2X

Twice as many students reported feeling a sense of purpose and motivation to achieve meaningful change for themselves or their communities after the program.

## Teacher Feedback



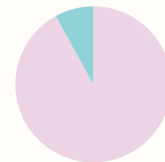
100%

agreed that the program was a **worthwhile investment** of class time.



100%

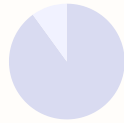
of teachers found Break The Divide resources **valuable for supporting students' learning** about the climate crisis and related emotional themes.



92%

of teachers rated the Climate Emotions Program as **easy to implement in their classrooms.**

## Volunteer Feedback



### Overall Experience

90%

of volunteers described their experience working with Break The Divide as **highly positive**.



### Onboarding Process

90%

found the volunteer onboarding process **quick and straightforward**.



### Knowledge Development

80%

reported **gaining new knowledge** about the diverse experiences of communities across Canada.



### Participation Enjoyment

100%

**enjoyed their participation** in the Climate Emotions Program.



### Willingness to Refer

92%

**were likely to recommend** the program to other schools.


## Quantitative Metrics

### Emotional Responses

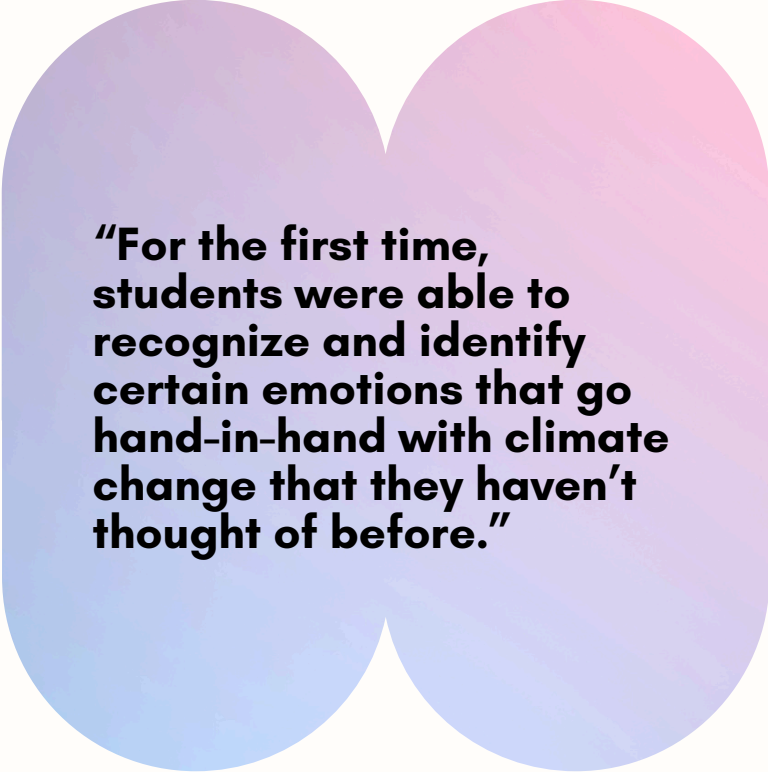
Many students expressed relief and solidarity upon learning that their peers shared similar climate-related emotions. A noticeable shift occurred from feelings of hopelessness to optimism, with students finding faith in collective action.

### Changes in Attitudes

Participants moved from passivity to recognizing their agency in addressing climate change. The concept of climate emotions enabled them to transform anxiety into constructive action.



**“That sense of empowerment when knowing you aren’t alone in your emotions was by far the best part of this program.”**



**“For the first time, students were able to recognize and identify certain emotions that go hand-in-hand with climate change that they haven’t thought of before.”**

### Personal Growth

Teachers, students, and volunteers noted significant growth in emotional intelligence, resilience, and leadership skills related to climate activism.

### Cultivating Hope

The program emphasized pathways toward action, empowering participants to see themselves as active contributors to solutions rather than passive observers.



“I think the students appreciated the collaboration with another school and understanding the geography and perspectives of another province. The sessions were well moderated.”

**Teacher, Nova Scotia**

# TESTIMONIALS

## From Teachers

Teachers have observed how the Climate Emotions Program encouraged their students to openly discuss their feelings about climate change, which has led to more **empathetic and engaged classrooms**.



### Teacher, Ontario

"I teach a psychology class and for the first time, students were able to recognize and identify certain emotions that go hand-in-hand with climate change that they haven't thought of before. [...] They also really enjoyed the artistic components that were included in the course"



### Teacher, Ontario

"I definitely recommend this program to other teachers, schools, and classrooms that really want to take more initiative in climate action change - there were a lot of resources and there were tons of links to different organizations, local organizations as well that would really inspire students to think about realistic and very practical ways of taking action to combat climate change"



### Teacher, Nova Scotia

"I think the students appreciated the collaboration with another school and understanding the geography and perspectives of another province. The sessions were well moderated."



### Teacher, British Columbia

"Students welcomed the opportunity to share about their climate emotions and learn new terminology to express their emotions."

## From Volunteers

Volunteers who facilitated the sessions shared insights about how the program helped them manage their own climate anxieties and better understand youth perspectives on climate emotions.



**Sydney Bartos, Ontario**

"The biggest strength of this program was the opportunity for community building. And the opportunity to bring visibility to an important issue that many school-aged kids are already well aware, and ensure they have tools to understand climate change and to better manage emotions that surround it."



**Alliza Leogo, Ontario**

"The best part about volunteering was the opportunity to work with such interesting, knowledgeable, and passionate people."



**Kimberly Anganu, Quebec**

"I think it is so unique, I haven't seen a program like this before!"



**Teacher, British Columbia**

"I think the students appreciated the collaboration with another school and understanding the geography and perspectives of another province. The sessions were well moderated."



**Airlea Rasul, Ontario**

"I learned more about eco-anxiety, eco-dissociation, and about the identity of communities all across Canada. That sense of empowerment when knowing you aren't alone in your emotions was by far the best part of this program."



**Julia Sterling, Ontario**

"I loved the way it brought different schools from different parts of the country together to have these difficult but important conversations"



**Julia Sterling, Ontario**

"I really believe in this project and would have wanted it when I was young, it hit close to home for me and it was really beautiful to be in the facilitator-mentor role for something so personal."



**Camryn Oyler, Nova Scotia**

"The whole program was fantastic and so beneficial for all participants."



**Emma Brooks, British Columbia**

"[The best part was] working with the other volunteers and connecting with the team! And of course, making meaningful conversation with students from across the country."



**Camryn Oyler, Nova Scotia**

"The best part about volunteering with Break The Divide was the lovely support staff. Aria was always so helpful and supportive, never missed an email, and always made sure we felt safe and welcome! Not only that, but the whole team from training made me feel very welcome and comfortable. It was great working with everyone!"



**Emma Brooks, British Columbia**

"I feel like I was simultaneously able to work on my own skills and contribute to the learning of students across the country. I also feel like we really got the students thinking which was remarkable to see. It's not often that young students have the chance to dive into how their community and climate change intersect. I really feel like we added to their curriculums!"



**Camryn Oyler, Nova Scotia**

"Growing up I did not have resources like this, so I think it was really amazing that schools across Canada were provided with tools to better understand their climate emotions"

## From Students

Students provided personal reflections on the emotional support and sense of solidarity they gained from the program, with many citing it as a turning point in how they viewed their role in the climate movement.



### Grade 11 Student, Ontario

"Before this program, I felt so lost and scared about the future. Now, I see that we can use these emotions to connect and create change."



### Grade 10 Student, British Columbia

"As a high school student, it can be overwhelming and exhausting to process your emotions while feeling isolated and hopeless when confronting the climate crisis. That's why programs like Break The Divide's Climate Emotions are so important."



### Grade 12 Student, British Columbia

"[The Climate Emotions Program] helped us navigate complex climate emotions, connect with other high school students across Canada, share experiences, and remind us that we're not alone in this fight."



### Grade 10 Student, Nova Scotia

"This was cool."



### Grade 9 Student, Ontario

"I really appreciate the time and effort from the facilitators. I feel that this is a difficult age group to work with digitally, but they did a good job trying to engage everyone nonetheless."



# PROGRAM SUCCESSES



## Emotional Support

One of the key successes of the program was allowing youth to feel less isolated and more hopeful about the future. Students learned about the concept of climate emotions, building emotional resilience while realizing they are not alone in their concerns about the environment.



## Community perspectives

Volunteers, students, and teachers contributed their perspectives on climate-related topics. These perspectives were gathered via video interviews and written reflections, further contributing to the program's impact.



## Cross-country connections

The program successfully facilitated dialogue and connection sessions between schools across Canada, particularly through virtual meetings between students in British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Ontario. These sessions were moderated by volunteers trained in climate emotions facilitation.



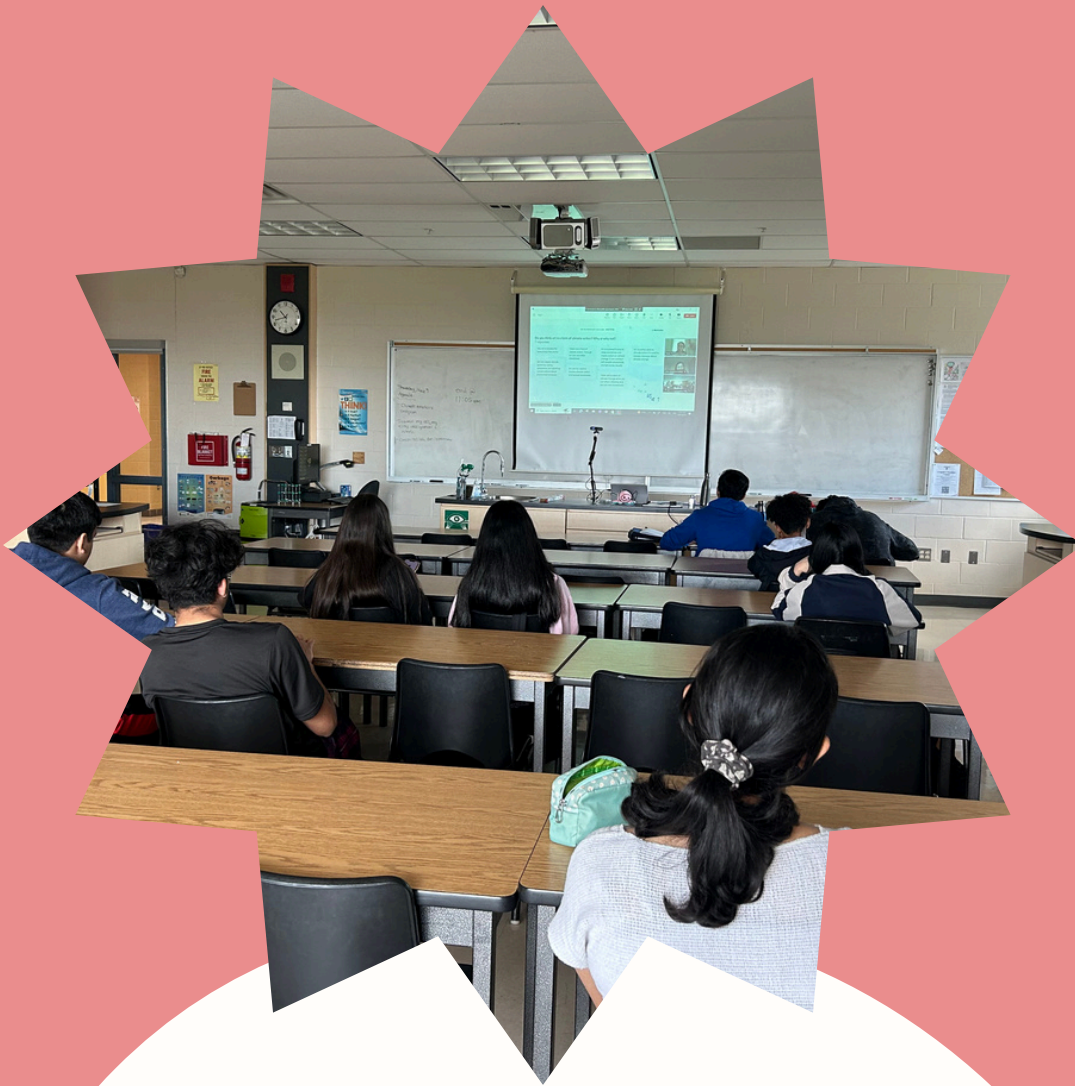
## Lessons learned

Having run this program, we now better understand how to successfully manage it, what the needs of the schools are, and how we can make adaptations for our program to create a more meaningful and profound change.



## Comprehensive resources

Finalized all of the program materials—including videos, PDF resources, lesson plans, discussion guides, and volunteer scripts—which were shared with teachers and students from 14 different schools.



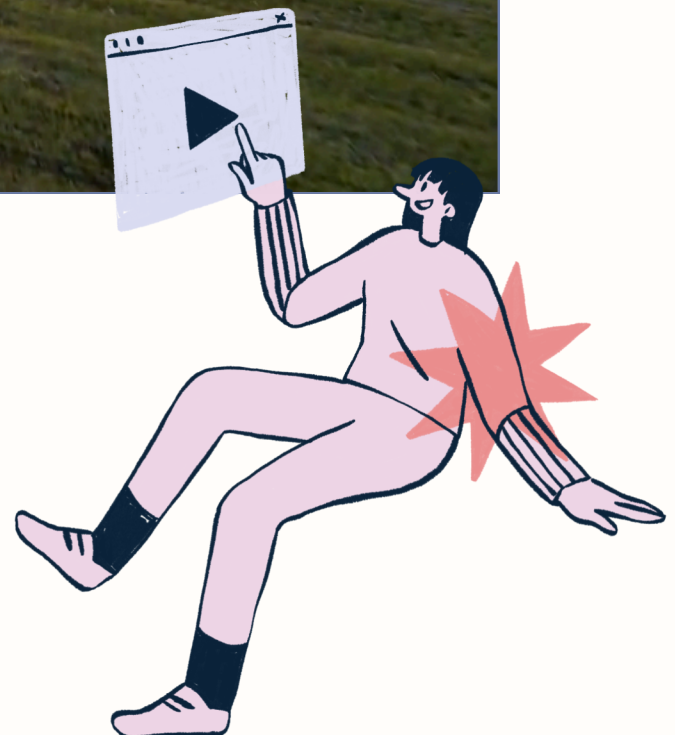
"I learned more about eco-anxiety, eco-dissociation, and about the identity of communities all across Canada. That sense of empowerment when knowing you aren't alone in your emotions was by far the best part of this program."

**Airlea Rasul, Volunteer, Ontario**

# VISUAL DOCUMENTATION

## Program Video

Once completed, the program video will highlight the main components of the Climate Skills & Community Building Fellowship Program, including participant testimonials and visual footage of the events.



# FUTURE PLANNING

Expansion Plans	Innovations & Improvements	Long-Term Vision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to scale the Climate Emotions Program to new regions, particularly underrepresented areas that face higher levels of climate vulnerability.</li> <li>• Expanding partnerships with schools and environmental organizations to scale up and reach more schools.</li> <li>• Develop more online resources to reach youth in rural or remote communities.</li> <li>• Develop a comprehensive resource library with different modules that encompass various lesson plans for teachers to be able to “build their own program” – pick and choose which modules they want to learn.</li> <li>• Make Break The Divide programming more flexible and expand the resource library so that we are able to make a more meaningful contribution to the students’ lives.</li> <li>• Recruit and train more dialogue facilitators, and encourage them to facilitate discussions within their communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on feedback from students and teachers, introduce new elements such as <b>arts-based emotional processing</b> or creative writing as part of the climate emotions curriculum.</li> <li>• Provide <b>mental health resources</b> specifically tailored to help youth navigate climate anxiety in the long term.</li> <li>• Include more <b>interactive games and activities</b> for the students to do before, during, and after the sessions.</li> <li>• Include examples of young people engaging in specific <b>climate projects</b>. Support students in creating and implementing these projects as advisors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Climate Emotions Program will continue to be central to <b>Break The Divide’s core strategy</b> for addressing the emotional and psychological impacts of climate change on youth. As we scale the program, we’ll focus on creating more community leaders who can foster dialogue on climate emotions and local climate action.</li> <li>• As we grow and learn, we hope that the Climate Emotions Connection Program is implemented in a wide array of schools across Canada, and eventually, across the world.</li> <li>• We envision a world where all high school students and youth are connected to discuss their climate experiences and emotions and feel empowered to pursue their passions and take collective climate action.</li> </ul>



"[The Climate Emotions Program] helped us navigate complex climate emotions, connect with other high school students across Canada, share experiences, and remind us that we're not alone in this fight."

**Student, Grade 12, British Columbia**

# CONCLUSION

## Program's Importance

The Climate Emotions Program plays a vital role in helping youth process their emotional responses to climate change, fostering a supportive community where they can connect and build resilience. By offering educational tools, emotional support, and opportunities for dialogue, the program has empowered young people to confront climate anxiety and take actionable steps toward climate justice.

**To continue supporting youth in addressing climate emotions, we call on partners, funders, and community members to stay engaged with the program and consider contributing to its expansion. Together, we can help young people turn climate anxiety into hope and action!**

### Volunteer Opportunities

Website

Instagram

Twitter

LinkedIn

Facebook

TikTok



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## Funders & Sponsors

We would like to sincerely thank our sponsor, Finance Engage Sustain (FES), for their financial support, which allowed us to develop and carry out the first run of our Climate Emotions Program.

“Support from the Youth Harbour and FES has been instrumental in allowing us to develop a structured, impactful program that has now reached students across Canada. This program has made it possible for young people to feel more hopeful about the climate crisis and inspired to take meaningful climate action.”

**Aria Kani (she/her),  
Program Manager at  
Break The Divide**

## Partners & Collaborators

Acknowledgment of organizations and individuals that have been key contributors to the program’s success, including:

### Organizations:

- FES
- Taking It Global
- Door Number One
- Climate Reality Project
- Ontario EcoSchools
- Be The Change Earth Alliance
- Mental Health Climate Change Alliance

### Individuals:

- Julie Dunleavy
- Kat Cadungog
- Kayla BreeLove Carter
- Michèle Andrews
- Michael Iachetta
- Autumn Trainor

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## Volunteers & Staff

A deep thank you to all volunteers and staff who dedicated their time and energy, including Abhay Singh Sachal, Aruzhan (Aria) Kani, Tariq Harney, and many more. Their efforts were critical to the successful facilitation of the Climate Emotions Program.

**Abhay Singh Sachal  
Tariq Harney  
Aruzhan (Aria) Kani  
Autumn Trainor  
Oliver Gatzke  
Camryn Oyler  
Airlea Rasul  
Alliza Leogo**

**Divija Madhani  
Andrew Jackson  
Emma Brooks  
Annie Ding  
Kimberly Anganu  
Julia Sterling  
Wei Xu  
Junhua Qu**

# APPENDICES

## Supplementary Data

Include additional charts, graphs, and data points that further illustrate the program’s impact, such as changes in emotional resilience and participant engagement.

## Resources

[Psychology and Nature III: Discovering Your Environmental Identity](#)

[How climate change affects your mental health](#)

[Climate Emotions Wheel](#)

[Climate Mental Health Resources](#)

[BreeLove Counselling Clinic](#)

[BreeLove’s Team](#)

[Community Counselling Program](#)

[What YOU can do about climate change](#)

[How to Find Joy in Climate Action](#)

[Venn Diagram PDF](#)

[Article by Sea Smart School Society](#)

[Article about Ikigai](#)

[Carbon Gap Report from the UN](#)

[Actions for a healthy planet](#)

[Gen Z Mental Health Climate Stories Video](#)

[Volunteering with Break The Divide](#)

[Care About Climate](#)

[Youth Challenge International](#)

[10 Ways You Can Help Fight the Climate Crisis](#)

[Climate Cafe](#)

[Environmental Challenges](#)

[Alberta Environmental Student Action Challenge](#)

[BTD Climate Café Sign Up Form](#)

[Youth Participation in Politics PDF](#)

[GoodWork Canada](#)

[Volunteer Hub](#)

[The Starfish Canada](#)



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