



There is nothing about a caterpillar that suggests it will change into a butterfly



Tide~ Elephant Times

Magazine Issue 3.3 April 2023



Welcome to ET 3.3

The Elephant Times [ET] offers space for dialogue about global realities amongst education professionals. This ET is part of a series exploring the educational implications of climate change.

Tide ~ Elephant Times



Cartoon by Martyn Turner

The **Elephant Times [ET]** magazine is a Tide~ network initiative.

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Cover: Comment from one of the Conversations ...

CHANGE? *"There is nothing about a caterpillar that suggests it will change into a butterfly"*

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See [Tide~ website](#) for overview of articles to date in this ET series.

Click on names to go to individual articles ...

They include - in order of appearance:

- ❑ [Ben Ballin & Richard Dawson](#) - *Is it already too late for climate education?*
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This Elephant Times takes up some of the themes highlighted in the conversation: **How goes it for awareness of the justice perspective?** [p 9]

Bill Scott [p 10] responds to **Tim Brighouse's** article [ET 3.2] offering five steps to climate education but he suggests they are not easy steps. He points out that, as climate change awareness develops, there is a need to increase the range of subjects that will have to contribute.

Liz Cripps reflects on the discussion and writes about empowering children. [p 18] She concludes that we, as educators, need to recognise that many young people are leading the way on climate justice. As well as cultivating citizenship and autonomy, we must recognise and respect it in our children and teenagers: their unique vulnerability and insight, their political voice.

Darius Jackson reviews Liz Cripps' book [p 12]. In the process he received an email from his daughter Inga saying "*it's beautifully written, both academic and accessible, it's really important to be both.*" An endorsement from a student that backs our profiling of the work.

Rachel Tomlinson, who joined several of the Conversations, is featured in a BBC R4 Inside Science programme talking about school dinners. We ask her about that [p22].

Colm Regan talked about schools responding to a fossil fuel sponsored Art Competition. Do they reject the funding? Do they subvert it with art that highlights climate issues or in "difficult times" do they take the cash? We asked him to reflect on the issue of 'Greenwashing' [p 24].

Ben Ballin, from the project's Core Group, hosted a Zoom conversation. It involved people Ben had worked with from Austria, The Gambia, Hungary, Italy, Kenya, Turkey, and Uganda. He shares key points [p 28].

A stimulus to dialogue?

We seek dialogue about an education-driven agenda as a response to the climate crisis

Dialogue about learner needs ...

- ◇ Learning & Well Being - [e.g. Eco-Anxiety]
- ◇ Climate Education Entitlement - Specific: ~ for children ~ for adolescents
- ◇ Development of Dialogue Skills ~ Capacity for Agency
- ◇ Teachers & Students working together

Dialogue about teachers & teacher entitlement ...

- ◇ Creative 'space' for on-going need to maintain our own awareness
- ◇ Opportunities to work on curriculum development with other teachers

Dialogue about school organisation ...

- ◇ The implications for school leadership
- ◇ Sustainability Policies & how they link to learner opportunities

Wider dialogue - e.g. about ...

- ◇ Curriculum policies ~ Accountability priorities
- ◇ Networking ~ Teachers ~ Subjects ~ Leadership

The ET articles [see list p2] are offered as a stimulus to dialogue about the educational implications of climate change. The next few ET magazines will consider other aspects from the 'starter conversation' last November but then we need to take stock - **to bring together a proposition about the particular role of schools in responding to the climate crisis.**

We seek to complement, and profile, climate change driven initiatives but argue for the need to recognise that it is also an education issue - about the core school business of learner needs.

To help synthesise thinking we will set up consultations in September. Before then there are also plans for Zoom workshops including:

- ❑ **Stories to stimulate dialogue skills** [Tuesday 13th June at 4.15]
Interested? - please email us.

Plans for the day conference at Cardiff University, introduced in the last Elephant Times are taking shape. See [Bassaleg School website](#).

- ❑ **'Teens and Teachers Take on Climate Education'** [Thursday 29th June]

The outcomes of this event will also inform proposals for a learner entitlement to climate education.

The issues are many, complex and dynamic.

The context is difficult, not least because the realities also challenge some assumptions about schooling.

Tide~ seeks to support the creativity of education professionals to develop appropriate responses that enhance their role in enabling learners - in their learning and their well-being.

As Anne Dolan put it in conversation

" We can't expect children to solve the climate crisis but we sure as hell have a duty to help them navigate it."



Daily Mail - 24th February 2023



**A healthy economy
should be designed
to thrive, not grow**

Kate Raworth TED TALK

Click on visual to view

The context is difficult yet as Liz Cripps suggests [p18] it should not be controversial - but it is. The debates involved in thinking about the educational implications of climate change challenge our professional integrity. They bring us up against the confusion of political division.

What is needed is **“a vast international, co-operative effort” “Every country will be affected - no one can opt out.”**

“The negotiation of protocols will undoubtedly be difficult. And no issue will be more contentious than the need to control emissions of carbon dioxide” - “We can’t just do nothing. But the measures we take must be based on sound scientific analysis”

“The UK therefore proposes that we prolong the role of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change after it submits its report next year, so that it can provide an authoritative scientific base for the negotiation of this and other protocols.”

Woke words? No, all the quotes above are from Margaret Thatcher speaking at the [UN in New York in 1989](#). It is a long speech but worth a look.

This highlights the current problem about the quality of political debate, a debate that can often be dismissive of climate change or human rights. Professionally we cannot drop to that level but it does increase the challenge of presenting a so called ‘balanced view’.

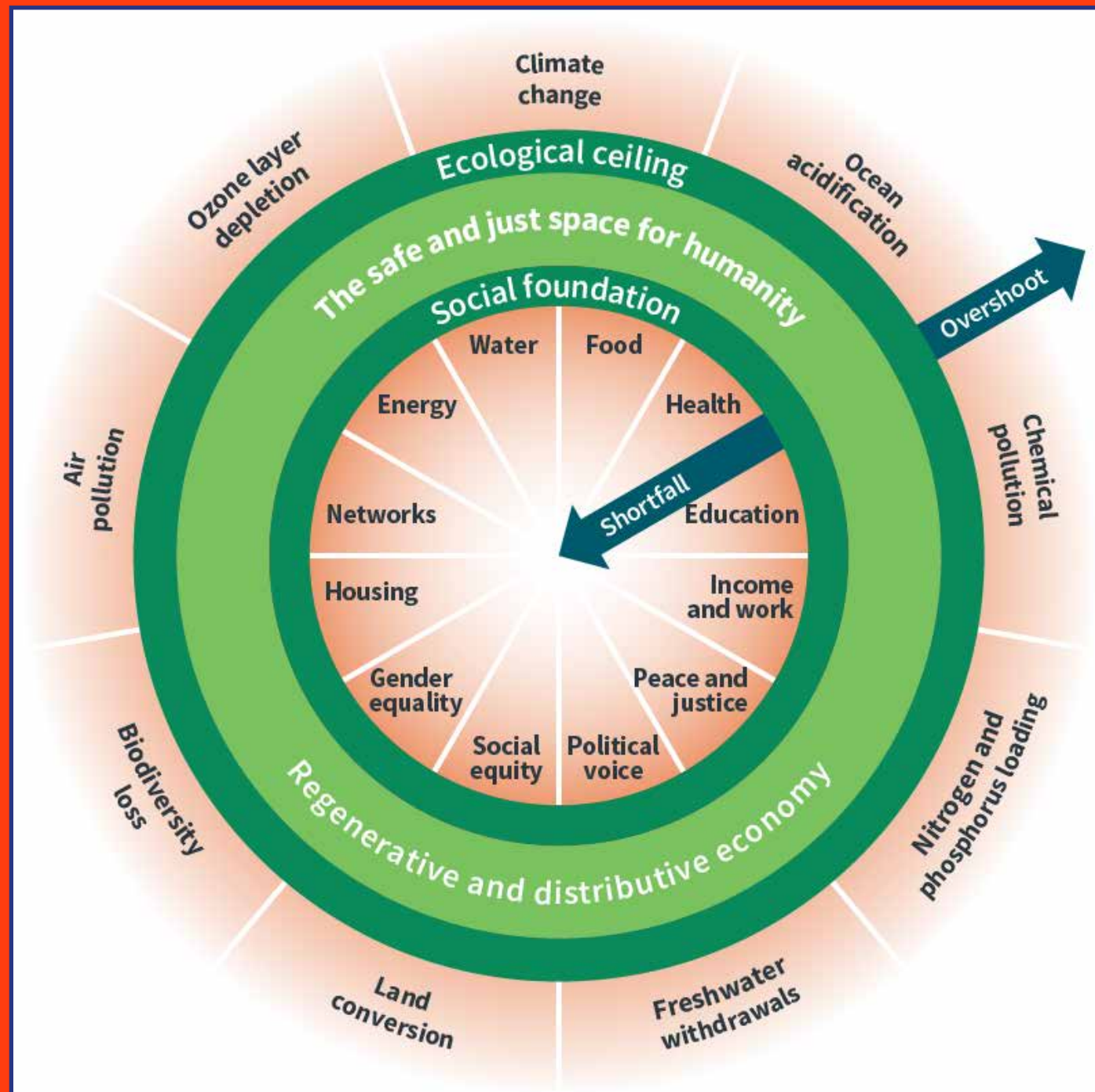
Is this an exaggeration? The obituary article in the Daily Mail [p 6] perhaps symbolises the issue. Why does this headline take the opportunity to be gratuitous about climate change? Most odd.

We now know that oil companies knew about the dangers of climate change in the 1970s. Their documented predictions were amazingly accurate, anticipating upward trends in global temperatures and carbon dioxide emissions that are close to what actually happened. Yet they invested in questioning that science, and undermining public awareness. **So if we, as educators, are a little confused, it is not surprising.**

We all need ‘space’ to build our own understanding - and in that context consider the long term implications for meeting learner needs.

Kate Raworth’s TED talk offers a stimulating insight - and also raises questions about models of change that are worth our consideration. On page 8 there is a copy of the doughnut diagram she refers to.

Doughnut Economics Diagram



How goes it for awareness of the justice perspective?

This was the theme of the last of the November Conversations. In many ways it should have been first because it helps clarify what is involved when we talk about “understanding climate change”.

This is an overview of that conversation

Liz Cripps [see p 17] introduced the conversation by arguing that children should be taught about climate justice, rather than simply climate change, and that an essential element of climate justice is activism.

Liz argued that many young learners are aware of the justice aspects of climate change and the role of environmental activism, and that such an awareness develops even though they are not taught about it in school.

Participants suggested that such an awareness comes not only from the media, but also from their personal experiences of, say, local air pollution around in their neighbourhood, from their family/community links to other parts of the world or from their own actions in leading climate activism.

There are clear implications in school of teaching climate as a moral [and not simply a technical, economic, political or science] issue that requires a cross-discipline approach and that needs to be reflected in the learner's experience. Further, no one prescribed agenda or approach is applicable and that it is also about creating a healthy, fair environment in schools.

Participants reflected on the extent to which effective climate education will challenge the status quo and the power-holders in society, business and “the establishment”. This challenge may result in considerable obfuscation as it requires critical thinking skills, and whilst many educators argue they are developing such skills in their learners, they may well not be doing so.

Further, schools, and therefore learners, are open to exploitation in the form of ‘greenwashing’. School managers’ desire to access funding is understandable, but there is a need to recognise the implications of, for example, funding from industry involved in fossil fuels. “Is there a danger that naivety about this leads to us adding to such exploitation?”

Source: [Doughnut Economics](#) website

See also article ‘*Bridging gaps and building wisdom*’ written by [Harriet Marshall](#) in the formative stages of the Elephant Times.

Climate Education - five uneasy steps

Bill Scott - University of Bath

Bill - William Scott is emeritus professor of education - University of Bath.

Chair of Trustees - [National Association for Environmental Education](#).

One of the founding editors of [Environmental Education Research](#).

[His article in ET 1.4](#) helped set the scene for Tide's current work.

It is a mantra beloved of environmental educators that young people should **experience education about, in and for the environment**. These obviously relate to awareness, knowledge and understanding, first-hand practical experience, and the development of attitudes and values, and the capacity to act. This secular trinity is of long standing and remains a useful way of thinking about how to realise a curriculum.

This was brought to mind when I read [Tim Brighouse's article](#) in the last ET.

When it comes to climate change education, this mantra obviously does not work. Education for climate change anyone? And education in (during) climate change? Well, although that's what we're failing miserably to do now, it doesn't work as an idea.

A different way of thinking about all this is needed, and [NAEE](#) [National Association for Environmental Education] has made a start on this

NAEE argues that there needs to be a focus on five aspects ...

1. What is climate?
2. What's the evidence for global heating and the changing climate?
3. Looking ahead: what might happen if we carry on as we are?
4. Looking around: what are we already doing?
5. Looking forward: what might (or should) we be doing?

- 1** is the easy bit and it goes on already. It's uncontroversial, and there is a great deal of teacher experience and expertise.
- 2** is more complex and challenging. There is less teacher experience and expertise, and it's not in the national curriculum. There are good resources, and it's now largely uncontroversial.
- 3** is even more complex in both its nature, and in terms of how to help students learn. It's a difficult mix of clear science and scenario modelling – some of which suggest awful futures. It's not in the national curriculum at all.
- 4-5** bring new levels of difficulty, because they are inherently political, and values are in play. Although [4] might be thought of as factual, it will be impossible to focus sensibly on it without evaluating what is being done (and hence not done). Exploring this carries risk for a school but it's what groups of young people say they want. The national curriculum is silent.

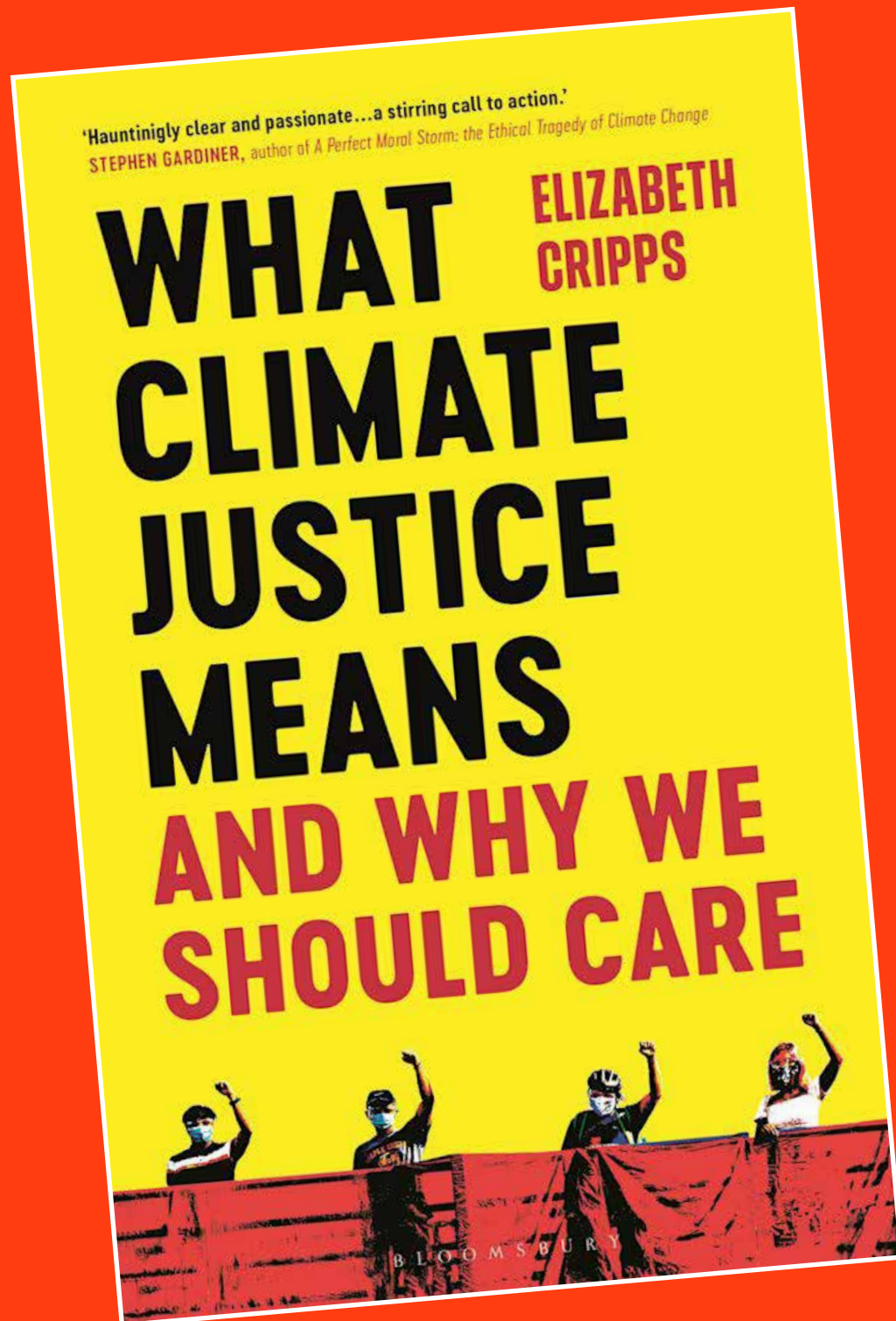
These five might be seen as broadly sequential. [1] is needed for a study of [2], and this is what the national curriculum sets out. [3] certainly needs [1] and [2] to be in place before it is tackled.

Logically, [4] should then come before [5] but it might make more sense, pedagogically, to integrate them.

But how should these play out across the key stages? And which subject(s) should get to teach about which aspects? If ever guidance is generated, it will always need be left to individual schools and/or trusts to determine operational matters.

One thing is clear, however, going from [1] to [5] sees an increase in the number of subjects that will have to contribute if students are to learn most effectively.

How goes it ... for awareness of the justice perspective?



Click on band to visit publisher: Bloomsbury

Darius Jackson [from the Elephant Times team]

Reviews 'What Climate Justice Means'

Every now and again you find a book that is not only easy to read, but is a mix of insight, tightly set out arguments and relevant world experience. All you can do is sit back and read it, safe in the knowledge that it is changing the way you look at the world. This is one of those books.

Elizabeth Cripps takes hold of your hand and leads you on a journey through ideas of justice, our consequent responsibilities to each other, and to nature, and then ends up with what we should do about it based on our bonds of mutual responsibility to each other. Not only that, but at no point does she become preachy, hyperbolic or unrealistic with her arguments, but still burns with indignation and passion throughout.

So why is it such a wonderful book?

Firstly, it does exactly what is says on the cover - it focuses on the issues of '*What is climate justice?*' and '*Why we should care?*'. It starts by exploring the nature of justice. It balances complex arguments with references to popular culture (Thanos from the Marvel film series), thought experiments and finishes with the example of three men jumping into a river to help rescue a man drowning in his car after it came off the road. She concludes her first chapter with the deceptively simple comment '*...climate justice is about having institutions fit for purpose: institutions to fulfil the shared obligations that we all have, as humans, to protect one another's most vital interests*'.

Secondly, she goes beyond just humans. The natural world is under threat. In the UK the annual survey of garden birds has shown huge falls in bird numbers and once common birds such as house sparrows, lapwings and song thrushes are in serious decline, whilst the fall in bee numbers has even been mentioned in episodes of Dr Who, as well as the BBC's Wild Isles series. Habitat loss is a global issue and as more animals move into towns across the world the risks of more viruses crossing from one species to another only increases. However, Cripps' argument is even more profound than that, she argues that **environment needs to be protected for itself as we are part of the same ecosystem**. If nature cannot flourish, then humans can't either simply because of our 'dependence on the world' (p127).

Climate change is a global issue
It needs global co-operation to respond
Thinking about solutions raises questions of global justice



“

Climate harm is about lack of privilege. It hurts those already disadvantaged worst of all. In sweeping terms, that means the global south. ‘I can tell you,’ writes Vanessa Nakate, ‘a 2°C hotter world is a death sentence for countries like mine’.

For millions of Africans. 1.2°C of warming is a living hell: a life sentence of depleted food, cyclones, floods, droughts. ”

Elizabeth Cripps

Thirdly, she looks at structure and agency. It is all too easy to wrap climate change in an individualistic narrative, recycling cans and bottles, using public transport, turning lights off and not printing emails. Cripps highlights the importance of corporations and government in fighting climate change. If there are no buses, how can people use public transport? It’s not that corporations are inherently evil, or CEOs are gleeful about destroying the world as they stroke their white blue-eyed Persian cats. It is much simpler than that; **the market is not a democracy, one person does not equal one vote, with respect for diverse opinions and human rights.** It is based on money, and one pound does equal one vote.

Consequently, the rich have more influence as they have more demand in the market. The market, by its very nature, must prioritise the demands of the well-heeled over the demands of the poor and marginalised. This becomes a hugely important point when, as she points out, the richest 22 men in the world own more wealth than all the women in Africa. **Those who suffer the most from climate change are those with the least...**the global poor, women, children, people of colour and the natural world rather than the rich whose consumption is itself a driver of climate change.

Cripps is also critical of technological dreams of converting the upper atmosphere into giant mirrors over the ice caps, so they refreeze. As she points out these ideas are untested, they sound great, but are probably too good to be true. There are similarly fantastic ideas such as moving the world population into mega cities, thus, freeing up half of the planet for re-wilding or fertilising the seas to stimulate plant and algae growth ... OK, this would wreak havoc with the oceans’ ecosystems. What these projects have in common is that they are fantasies of the global elite, so they can continue to live their affluent lifestyle.

These ‘solutions’ ignore the simple problem that ‘there is no global government to organise and finance the project, so how will this be arranged?’. If it is financed by heroic billionaires we need to ask, ‘What gives them the right to decide that people, who are not the causes of Climate Change, will have to move to live in a megacity?’. As Cripps puts it so well, **‘the only thing standing between the global rich and non-evil alternatives is their own refusal to adopt them’** (p104).

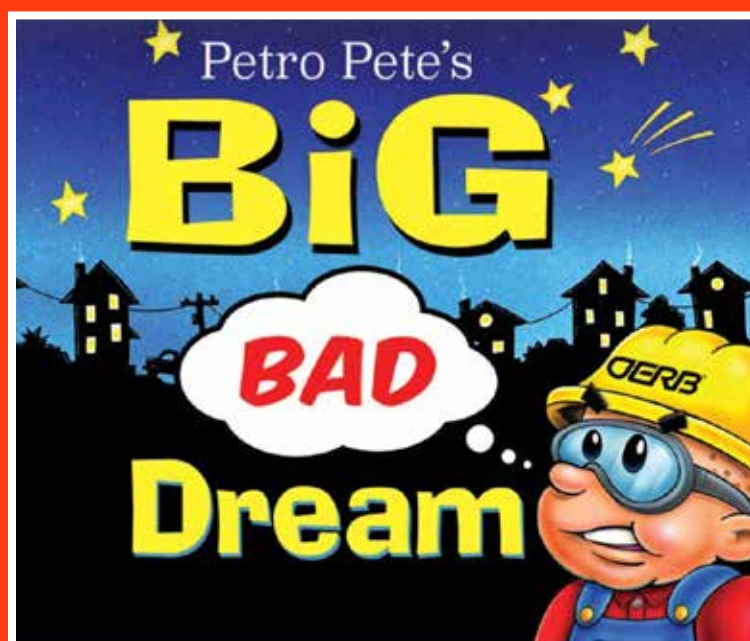
“*Money talks to children. In 2017, a conservative think-tank circulated a book to hundreds of thousands of American science teachers. It was called Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming, credited to the carefully named Non-governmental International Panel on Climate Change*

..... the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board funded pro-fossil fuel educational materials: curriculums, speakers, after-school programmes. The highlight? A series of books about a cartoon character, ‘Petro Pete’. Pete thrives on oil products, but occasionally faces the nightmare that they might be snatched away, leaving his life empty.

(I wish I were making this up, but I’m really not.)

”

Elizabeth Cripps



Take a quick look at
Petro Pete's children's book

Click on visual to read

Fourthly, she is realistic. She is not outlining the solution, unlike the technologists above. She is suggesting ways to change public opinion and government policy. There will be opposition to the campaign, but she highlights the need for a broad based approach to encompass local and global issues, enlisting conservation volunteers to entrepreneurs (p174) all driven by the practical question ‘what works?’.

Early in the book she outlines the need for a range of responses to climate change, **mitigation + adaptation + compensation + polluter pays + removing the power of the wealthy to ride roughshod over everyone else + pressure on governments...** etc.

In the final chapter she is explicit that the outcome is not some kind of William Morris promised land, idyllic though it sounds, but ‘The fairest [society] we can get. The baseline? Not killing people; protecting basic interests’ (p174). This is without losing sight of the long-term project, a better greener future, **‘a society-and-world that people can thrive in’** (p152). This last phrase puts her firmly in the long and noble tradition of writers who critiqued their world and sought to build a better fairer future for all ‘citizens... of a global eco-political community’ (p159).

I will leave the last word to my daughter Inga -

“It’s one of the best books I’ve read. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it”.

Dr Elizabeth Cripps, a philosopher, is senior lecturer in political theory at the University of Edinburgh. She joined the Tide~ conversation. In the next article she reflects on that.

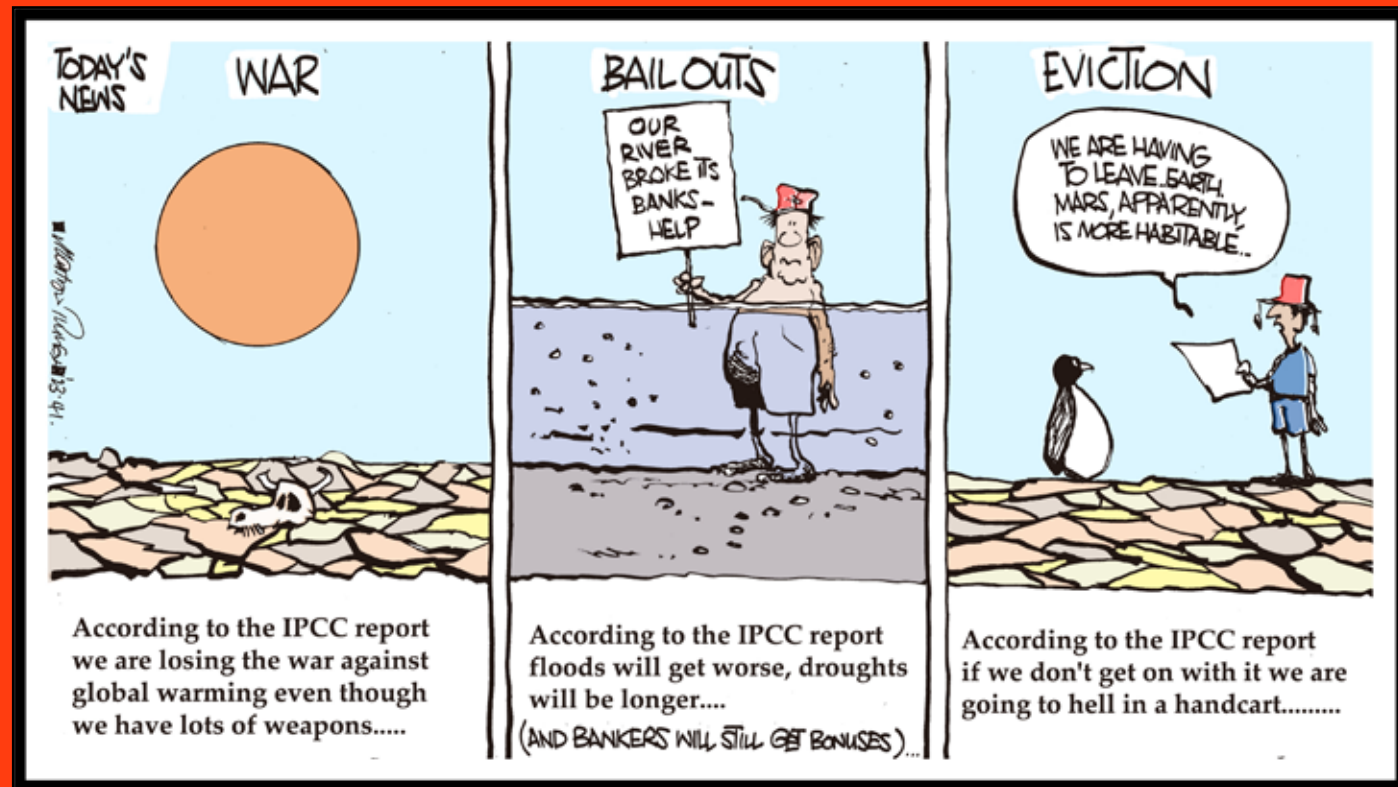
She is author of :

- *What Climate Justice Means and Why We Should Care*

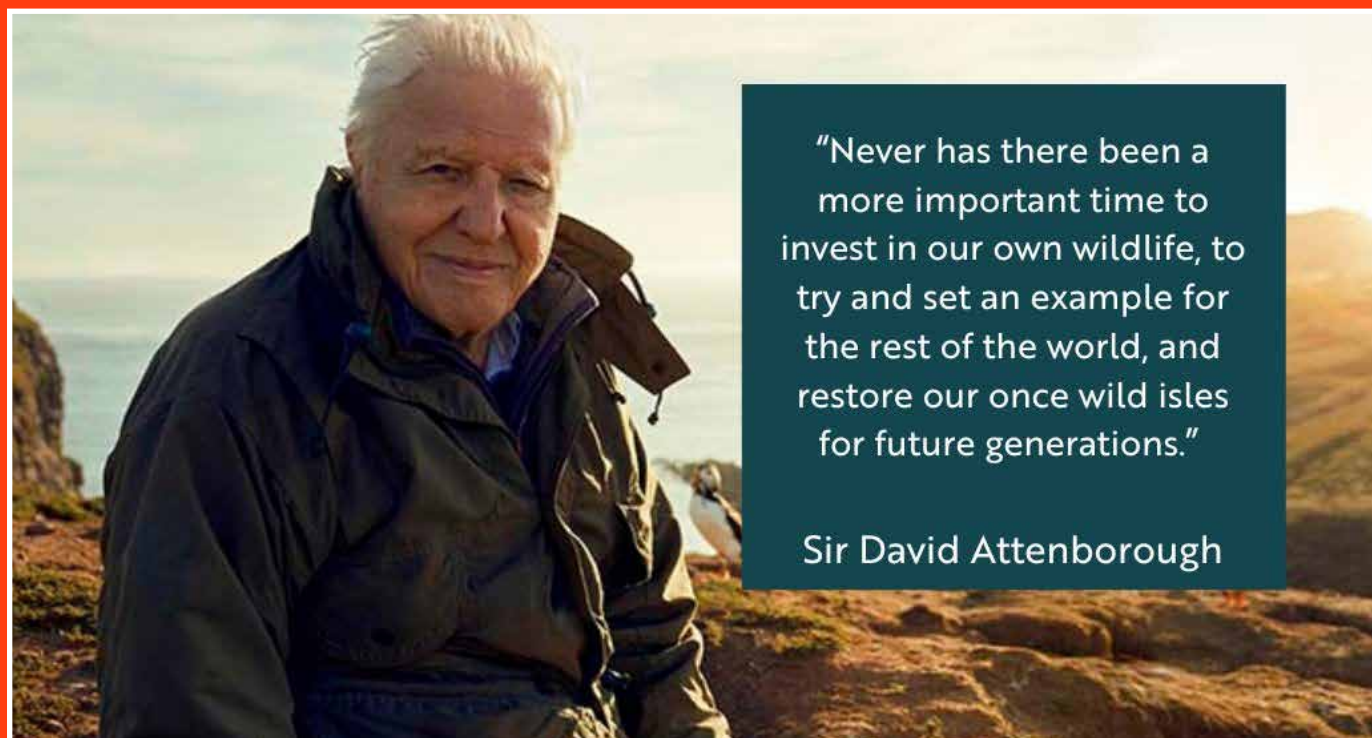
Publication due: *‘Parenting on Earth: A Philosopher’s Guide to Doing Right By Your Kids – and Everyone Else’.*

Empowering Our Children ...

Climate Justice and Education



Cartoon by Martyn Turner



"Never has there been a more important time to invest in our own wildlife, to try and set an example for the rest of the world, and restore our once wild isles for future generations."

Sir David Attenborough

Following the Tide~ Conversation Elizabeth Cripps reflects on empowering children

When Maroof Hussain was eleven, his school and house flooded. His eight-year-old friend, Iqbar, drowned. This tragedy was no natural disaster. It was caused by exactly the kind of extreme weather which is made worse by climate change.

Iqbar died in Bangladesh, one of the many poverty-stricken countries that are struck first and hardest by climate change. Even in a rich country like the UK, children can expect worsening heat-waves, floods and wildfires. They will, rightly, fear the future for any kids they have. And the final sting in the tail? They will inherit a kind of complicity: membership of the very institutions causing this devastation. **Children die because of the way we eat, travel, and heat our homes.** They die because of the politicians we vote into office and the corporations we hold shares in.

No wonder, then, that 59 per cent of those aged 16-25, across ten countries, are very or extremely worried about climate change. Or that almost three-quarters of UK kids aged eight to 16 surveyed in 2020 were worried about the state of the planet.

Educators know all this (or should). But what does it mean for what they must do, day on day, in UK schools? I don't have all the answers: **this must be an ongoing conversation between teachers, climate scholars, activists, and the young people and children themselves.** But, after an initial exchange of ideas at the Tide~ Conversation, I have a few thoughts.

Educating global citizens

Climate change is, fundamentally, a moral crisis: a massive violation of human rights. I put this centre stage in my book, *'What Climate Justice Means'*. **Without a moral baseline, we cannot adequately judge the inevitable political compromises, nor assess technological innovation.**

What's more, this vast injustice is inseparable from past discrimination. Those harmed worst – the global south, women, people of colour, Black and Indigenous communities – have done least to cause climate change, have been excluded from global decision-making, and bear the scars of historical atrocities.

What climate justice means ...

1. **This should not be controversial.** It's become politically polarized, but climate justice is about the bare minimum we owe to one another. It's about people being able to lead decent lives, not starving or drowning or dying of malaria, now or in the future. It's about not killing our fellow human beings.
2. **Climate change does not destroy at random.** Climate injustice is racial injustice, gender injustice. Those with most at stake, who are least responsible for climate harms, are losing everything, and they are losing it because of colonialism, slavery, oppression, and systematic disregard for basic human rights.
3. **Climate justice is multi-species justice.** Climate change destroys biodiversity. It drives species to extinction and kills individual animals. This is an injustice, in its own right.
4. **Climate justice means systematic change.** It requires participation: global, inter-sectional, and intergenerational. It requires mitigation, adaptation and compensation. Polluters must pay for this, unless they're too poor. The rich must pay, especially if they're rich on the back of past injustice.
5. **In practice, this isn't happening.** Major polluters refuse to do their bit: governments corporations and individuals. The best option? Persuade or require them to comply. Until then, everyone must choose between lesser evils.
6. **Individuals feel powerless but have collective power.** We should work with motivated others to challenge climate injustice, through inclusive activism, low-carbon movements, renewable and adaptation industries. In a world in crisis, each of us can - and must - be a responsible global citizen.

The lessons for teachers and curriculum-designers? Firstly, a reminder that education is about raising the next generation of citizens, as well as individuals. In our threatened, interconnected world, citizenship is global and intergenerational.

Secondly, this is no 'add-on', to be secured by an extra, standalone climate module. Climate change has implications for almost everything taught in schools, as it has for every part of our children's lives. In recent years, universities have seen a drive to decolonise the curriculum; some push for a parallel '**greening**' of pedagogy, **recognising the inseparability of our own flourishing and culture from the world we are collectively destroying.**

For schools, the challenges are enormous, especially for those in the state system, with limited resources and reliance on often unprogressive politicians. However, the case for embedding climate justice at the centre of the curriculum, is every bit as compelling.

Resilience and reality

This is also about how we teach. 'Dear politicians,' ran a newspaper column by activist Anjali Sharma in 2022, '**young climate activists are not abuse victims, we are children who read news.**' In other words, teachers can't stay quiet so as not to frighten children. They are scared already – and they are right to be.

Interviewing psychologists for my next book, '**Parenting on Earth**', it became clear to me that climate activism can help assuage anxiety, and build resilience. We owe children the truth. We owe them the tools they will need to face the future and to change it. But this truth telling must be nuanced, psychologically informed, and age appropriate. (A great place to start? Harriet Shugarman's *How to Talk to Kids about Climate Change*.)

As educators, we must also recognise that many young people are leading the way on climate justice. As well as cultivating citizenship and autonomy, we must recognise and respect it in our children and teenagers: their unique vulnerability and insight, their political voice. I try to find that balance in a university context. **My students have taught me, even as I seek to guide them.** For school teachers this, too, is a difficult, age-appropriate balancing act – but it's what our young citizens deserve.

What's for lunch?

Learning from vegetarian & plant based choices

Mac & Cheese

Cheese Whirl

Veggie sausage
and mash

Veggie Curry

Pizza



BBC R4 Inside Science
Vegetarian School Dinners

School interview at 10.30
Click on visual to listen

Rachel Tomlinson, Head at Barrowford Primary, in Lancashire joined several Tide~ Conversations in November. Recently her school featured in a BBC Radio 4 'Inside Science' programme about vegetarian school dinners -- so we asked her about it.

In the programme the children are enthusiastic and enjoyed the choices. **We recommend listening to the programme.**

Rachel said "We serve incredibly delicious food with 3 or 4 vegetarian or plant based choices each day, we also offer chicken and, on Friday, a fish choice". The chicken was added 3 days a week when it was realised that regulations, that date back 60 years or more, stipulate that.

There is scope for improving the regulations but it would be a pity if that also reduced the local engagement and learning opportunity.

"This goes hand in hand with learning about sustainability."

"It is about offering experiences, not forcing a vegetarian diet."

Rachel points out she is not a vegetarian herself. She has reduced the amount of meat she eats because of an awareness of the impact of farming on climate change, particularly the methane burps, slurry and use of fertilisers linked to intensive livestock farming.

School budgets cannot buy quality meat so overall the quality of what is on offer has improved too. Asked about waste, Rachel observed that there is not that much. Children choose what they want first thing in the morning, so quantities are determined on that basis.

There was some negative media interest but parents are supportive. Once a week a class invites parents to join them for lunch. **This has many positive outcomes, not least an awareness of the menu and quality of the food, and an insight into how it connects to the curriculum.**

Rachel has made a contribution to the next ET magazine. It focuses on the school's approaches to learning.

Greenwashing ...

Climate Justice and Education



Click on cover to view

Colm Regan - highlights the need to question the environmental claims made in adverts

In 2019, Hyundai launched a hydrogen powered Nexo car in the UK describing it as being 'so beautifully clean' that it 'purifies the air as it goes'. The company went further arguing that if 10,000 of its cars were on the road, carbon emission reduction would be 'equivalent to planting 60,000 trees'. The assertion that the new car could be driven without pollution sounded too good to be true (think tyre air particulates alone), and in June 2021 the UK advertising regulator found that it was.

In 2018, restaurant chain McDonald's declared an end to 1.8 million plastic straws a day in its UK restaurants declaring the move part of its 'greener' agenda. However, this 'good news' story turned out not to be so. Eventually, McDonalds admitted that the thickness of its new paper straws made them difficult to recycle currently despite claiming they were '100% recyclable'.

Green claims (often amounting to pure 'greenwashing') are now routinely used to sell almost any type of product from cars to plane tickets, soft drinks, cleaning fluids, washing machines, toiletries and, of course, fashion. All manner of companies have been criticised for making misleading or false 'green' claims from Ryanair to Innocent, IKEA, H&M Fashion and Shell ([find out more here](#)).

Going green is now de rigueur for business, and consumers are increasingly willing to pay more for eco-friendly products. Research suggests that the public (especially younger people) want companies to make environmental issues a much higher priority. In this context, 'greenwashing' a company or product is big (huge) business and is now a dominant form of advertising.

At the forefront of such greenwashing are fossil-fuel companies who currently spend multiple millions advertising their 'greenness', their commitment to the planet and its future, and their plans for decarbonisation while pushing ahead with expanding fossil-fuel production. For example, such companies spent US\$4 million on Meta ads alone in the lead up to Cop27 spreading false and misleading claims on the climate crisis (as they have done since 1977), on net-zero targets, and on the future need for fossil fuels.



Finally, it is important to consider the assertion of US environmentalist Bill McKibben who argued that

Climate change has made activists of us all.

**The choice is clear environmentally –
inactivism or activism**

As in so many other contexts, social media is now at the forefront of the environmental battle on greenwashing. Fossil fuel companies and the firms that work closely with them are big spenders on ads made to look like Google keyword search results, something environmental campaigners have described as ‘endemic green-washing’. In Ireland, Texaco is funding sports clubs while continuing to support a children’s art competition as a means of burnishing its fossil fuel agenda.

Under the umbrella of NGO Just Forests, a group of us have been directly involved in campaigning against their activities and have published a background paper and a suggested action agenda.

Most importantly, fossil fuel companies have worked assiduously to shift the environmental agenda to action by consumers and governments rather than themselves; they have sought to present themselves as honest and trustworthy partners for a better future. They have been heavily criticised for promoting a ‘great deception’ implying that companies at the forefront of driving the heating of the planet are in favour of sustainability.

The tactics of these and similar companies are, as has been true for decades, **denial, downplaying, deflecting, delaying, and even promoting despair.** As ever, education forms a key strand in challenging this damaging agenda.

In thinking how we can respond to this important agenda and debate, especially in the context of education, it might be useful to focus on some of the following:

- ☐ Discussion and debate about greenwashing and its purpose, as well as the issues behind it.
- ☐ Question activities taking a close look at ‘green’ adverts and products. Consider their wording and ‘hidden’ meanings.
- ☐ Develop skills to check sources of data / quotes.
- ☐ Learn about the different contexts of the debate, including its wider world, justice, and human rights elements.

Different angles ... & common ground



Opportunities to grow new crops such as avocados and jackfruit in the Ugandan hills

Hosted by Ben Ballin from the project's Core Group,
the Zoom conversation involved people Ben had worked with from:

- ❑ Austria - Kathrin Otrell-Kass - Change the Story project
- ❑ The Gambia - Ndey Sireng Bakurin - with Tide~ Educators for Sustainability
- ❑ Hungary - Márta Kurucz - Change the Story project
- ❑ Italy - Daniela Conti - Change the Story project
- ❑ Kenya - Hesborn Otianya - with Tide~ Young people on the global stage
- ❑ Türkiye - Güliz Karaaslan-Semiz - Change the Story project
- ❑ Uganda - Happy Bruno - Gorilla Gardening
- ❑ UK - Jeff Serf - Tide~ project core group

Ben Ballin writes up some of that conversation ...

We asked, **what kind of education do young people need now, as we draw close to some cataclysmic tipping points?** Abstract knowledge alone does not seem particularly helpful in such circumstances. 'Now' feels like an alarm call.

Güliz Karaaslan-Semiz reminded us of David Orr's exhortation that **we don't just need more education, but "the kind of education that informs and enlarges the mind and engages the heart and the hands in the process of learning"**. The group had things to say about what that might look like.

A curriculum that takes young people seriously

While the climate crisis remains the preserve of extra-curricular clubs in many schools, it also 'surfaces everywhere' across the formal curricula of a growing number of schools. This is encouraging. There is, however, a need for fresh, up-to-date thinking and the development of **'action competencies'** that go beyond such obvious actions as turning lights out.

Community offers a key resource. What community stories do we give children space to hear?

For Kathrin Otrell-Kass, we *"need to find the partners that young children need, who not only listen and pat them on the head, but who actually respond with the same meaningful seriousness that children have put into their work ... I would like to find people in the community (local or wider) and have them in at the very early stages as sparring partners."*

Daniela Conti pointed out **a need to tune into and reflect on the anger and urgency that many young people feel right now**. The alternative to such strategies may be disenchantment and disengagement.

Pedagogy of mind, hands and heart

More positively, this implies that **"the climate crisis is a wonderful opportunity to understand how to bring the curriculum to life as something that matters to children**. Start from what children think and what they need to develop and need to know" (Daniela).

Márta Kurucz described children's excited responses to the natural world. *"Inside, the children have a nature-shaped hole. When they arrive at our educational centre, they bolt down nature. They just want to run and run. From the lowest gate to the highest."*



Even within this small group, local imprints of the climate crisis were acute. They included:

- ♦ *Killer landslides in rural Uganda;*
- ♦ *Devastating wildfires in Eastern Türkiye;*
- ♦ *School closures affecting thousands, due to rising waters in Kenyan lakes Bogoria and Baringo;*
- ♦ *Crop failures and dried-up rivers in Northern Italy;*
- ♦ *Opportunities to grow new crops such as avocados and jackfruit in the Ugandan hills - [see p 28].*



Given such a starting point, an over-emphasis on formal content can be a potential block. However, a deeper understanding of content can be arrived at through a carefully-supported learning journey that engages both teacher and learners. As a clear example from his own practice, Happy Bruno described children ‘learning by doing’ about conservation and agriculture through growing crops that support afforestation and conservation and respond to local needs and circumstances, supported by both teachers and women’s gardening groups.

Connecting real world stories

Hesborn Otianya told us, **“we are now getting an awakening because the challenges are here with us.”** International dialogue often reminds us that the climate crisis is happening now. [See opposite page]

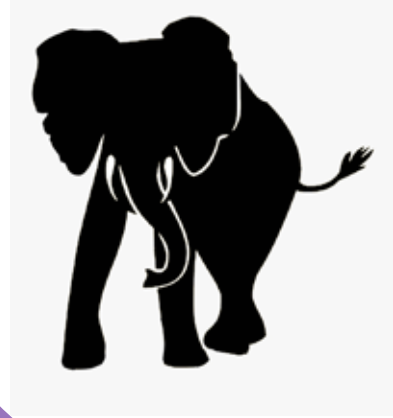
There is huge value in teachers and learners encountering such first-hand stories, through visits, visitors, ‘live’ online presentations and dialogue or school partnerships. While secondary sources such as film documentaries can help make climate stories accessible, there is **added value in children hearing them directly and making an immediate social and emotional connection to them.** If we choose to listen, climate stories will also be present and ready to be heard within our diverse school communities and neighbourhoods.

Encountering diverse climate stories raises questions about the connections between them and therefore the need for children (and teachers) to understand the systemic processes at work: how “whatever happens in one part of the world can affect another.”

As Kathrin explained, *“It is important to learn that the landslides in Uganda are not just something that happens, but are linked to a complex system”,* so that *“we are not just falling from one event into the next and we can start to understand the subtle connections between the things we are finding out about, the changes that we might make.”* Historical evidence can also throw light on the processes involved and help us visualise the future.

It is not surprising that **our meeting repeatedly stressed the importance of connections and networking,** within and between communities, across age groups, and including the need for teachers and educators to keep talking urgently and sharing their practice and experiences.

Elephant Times



Connecting Dialogues

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