

# the SPACE

Transformative Learning & Reflection Space



**the SPACE** (Transformative Learning & Reflection Space) is a student-led initiative and part of the Contemplative Sustainable Futures Program at Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS). It is a listening and sharing space to feel safe and connected in times of insecurity; offering an “open space”, which can be used for self-organised activities aimed at working with personal issues related to climate and other socio-environmental crises, including climate anxiety, ecological grief, and/or reduced face2face contact.

## IDEA AND CONCEPT

The idea to create the SPACE developed out of the students' need to talk about and process the content of their studies outside the classroom. Many sustainability students experience feeling subdued and overwhelmed when leaving the classroom, worried about the things they read in papers or even laying awake, thinking about the world and the future. Considering the fact that environmental studies can be quite substantial and intense, it is understandable that it sometimes feels like everything is becoming a bit 'too much'. What we learn has a strong influence on what we think, what we feel, and how we act. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to how our studies affect us. The knowledge that we gather cannot simply be separated from our daily lives. There is no off switch.

So how do we cope with such feelings and thoughts? Do we start telling everyone around us what we know about sustainability? Do we always engage in conversations? During lectures, there is not much time to talk about these types of questions. This is why at Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS) we have created the SPACE. It is crucial to create space for self-reflection and to meet others and one's own thoughts and feelings with openness, presence and acceptance. Beyond conversations, we are expressing ourselves and experiencing our thoughts and feelings through different practices, such as art and mindfulness. the SPACE aims to support students to stay connected with themselves, as well as the others, the environment and the world to support inner-outer sustainability and transformation.

# ACTIVITIES SO FAR

## Climate Change Stress Relief Day

Kick off event on April 5th, 13:00-16:00h

Number of participants: 20

Originally planned as an offline event at LUCSUS, due to COVID-19, the content of the kick off event was adapted/modified and the activities were held online via zoom. The program included different practices such as a creative writing session, meditation, group reflections on climate change and pandemic related anxiety, collective singing, yoga and an inspirational presentation about the interlinkages between inner growth and social transformation by Tomas Björkman.

## the SPACE Database

To prepare for the kick-off event and create a basis for future SPACE activities, a database of relevant resources was developed by Professor Christine Wamsler. The database presents readings, videos, practices, Apps and inspirational sources which can be supportive to stay connected and support inner-outer sustainability and transformation. The resources can be used both individually and together for different SPACE activities. Please note that it is a working document, which will be updated regularly based on existing needs, continuous learning and feedback.

# NEXT ACTIVITIES

## Activities planned for Autumn 2020

Respecting the university's covid-regulations, the in-person activities can be held in LUCSUS in accordance with the room capacity, and 1.5m distance must be obtained. The students need to sign up prior to the event and the participants' list will be checked to ensure safety for all.

Events are planned for every 6 to 8 weeks. Each event should take between two to three hours. We will invite guest speakers for external input as well as seek for cooperations with other organisations and initiatives. Focus will be on contemplative and art-based practices. Sessions include i.a. creative writing/ poetry, painting and sketching, meditation and mindfulness.

In order to introduce the SPACE to the students from batch 24, a welcome fika will be hosted beginning of October. The first activity will be a workshop on Climate Change Communication, held by Cara. Further activities will be on the topic of art-related stress relief and mindfulness. We have already been in contact with Diego Galafassi, who will hold an art session. Other possible collaborations include mindfulness trainers from the LU Student health centre and Act (Acceptance and Commitment Training).

# VIRTUAL COMMUNITY

## the SPACE Facebook group

In order to stay connected while keeping physical distance, we have created a Facebook group to share tools and resources, relevant to the aim of the SPACE. The moderators are responsible for sharing posts regularly, but the goal is to establish an organic interaction with each other. Therefore, the group members are highly encouraged to share their resources as well. Resources such as articles, practices, poems, songs, videos, movies etc. are very much appreciated.

# PARTICIPANTS

the SPACE is primarily open to all LUMES students and former LUMES students are kindly welcome to join. Additionally, interested students from other study programs at Lund University can participate.

# COORDINATION

the SPACE was jointly set up and is coordinated by a small group, consisting of 2-5 LUMES students, and is supported by Christine Wamsler and Amanda Elgh with ideas, logistics, contacts, readings, etc. Until now, Cara Siepenkort and Maris Pedaja have been the core of the student group. Further current LUMES students as well as LUMES alumni are invited to join the group and support the planning of the next activities as well as to approach the coordinators in case one has particular ideas and suggestions for potential future activities.

# CONTACT

For questions and feedback, please contact the LUCSUS coordinator Christine Wamsler ([christine.wamsler@lucus.lu.se](mailto:christine.wamsler@lucus.lu.se)), LUMES student coordinator Amanda Elgh ([amanda.elgh@lucus.lu.se](mailto:amanda.elgh@lucus.lu.se)) or the SPACE student group representatives Cara Siepenkort ([cara.siepenkort@googlemail.com](mailto:cara.siepenkort@googlemail.com)) and Maris Pedaja ([maris.pedaja@gmail.com](mailto:maris.pedaja@gmail.com)).