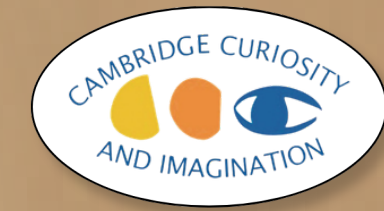




summary



raw your future



a LiA project by Koh Jia En

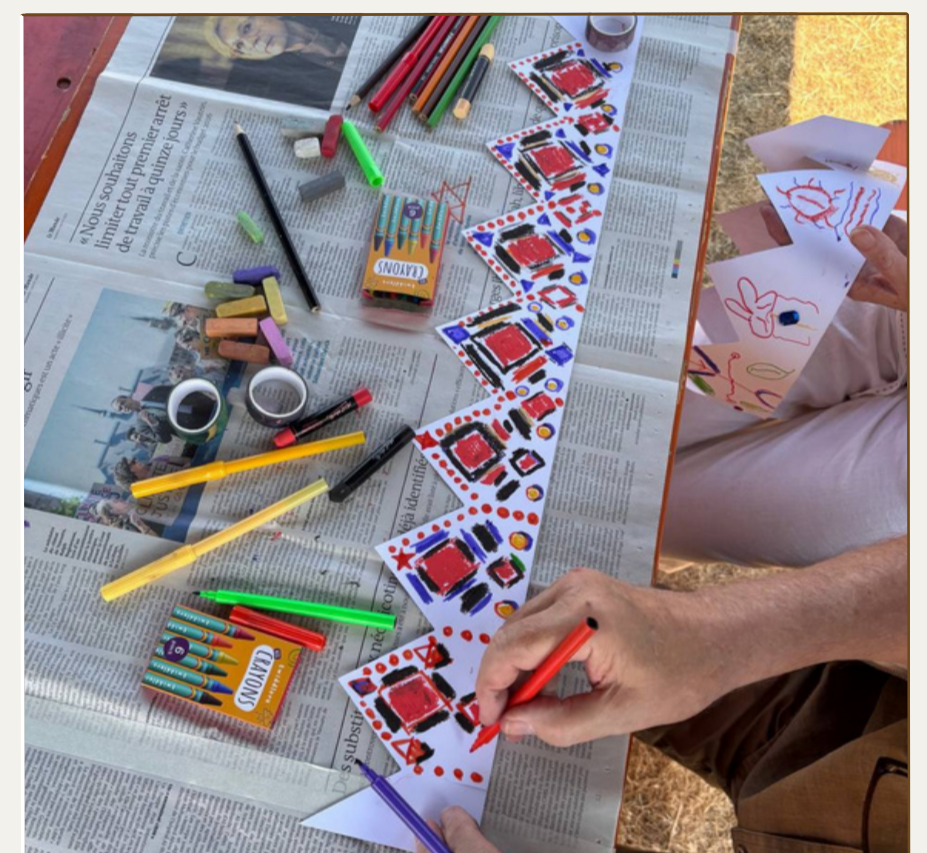
Experience at Cambridge Curiosity & Imagination

CCI is an arts and well-being charity founded in 2007. They focus on tackling children's well-being through artsclaping, an arts-in-nature approach. I facilitated artsclaping residency events at Trumpington Primary School and Mayfield Primary School, aside from research work that involves interviewing and arranging data.

Goal 1: Children's Well-being

The increasing prevalence of mental illness symptoms in children is alarming. Specifically, the COVID-19 pandemic was found to worsen this situation by restricting children's interactions with peers and nature.

In resolving this, CCI proposed artsclaping to increase the accessibility of art and nature. This is achieved by building eco-capabilities by allowing children to live a good life through contact with nature. From my observation, the children became more interactive with nature after artsclaping, while noting the experience as fun and relaxing. This converges with Walshe et al. (2022), who found an improvement in mental and emotional well-being. However, there was a possible gap: privilege in accessing art materials and green space. Consequently, school residency was suggested by collaborating with local primary schools in lower-income areas. Artists and therapeutic practitioners connected the children with nature and inspired an alternative learning method. The weekly artsclaping event encouraged children to reflect on their emotions through creativity. Interviewing the POCs revealed a recurring theme of connection with both human and non-human, aside from the freedom to artscape.



Goal 2: Climate Awareness

Climate attitude is closely related to the perception of human-nonhuman relationships. In particular, CCI's vision of ecocentrism differs from the traditional anthropocentric perspective by viewing humans as interdependent with animals and plants. This extends beyond plant blindness in addressing the mutual symbiotic relationship of the ecosystem. Based on a systematic review and my personal experience, artsclaping increased and improved children's awareness of the green environment, while building human-human and human-nature connections. This was illustrated by more nature-related drawings after artsclaping. Ultimately, artsclaping opened children's eyes to noticing the taken-for-granted, and therefore potentially tackling the dismissive climate attitude.

Goal 3: Leadership

CCI's leadership style diverges from the traditional top-down authoritative approach. In exploring this, I interviewed three leaders within the organisation.

1. Director: Emily Dowdeswell

Her leadership style revolved around preparing a comfortable environment to make the best versions of people. She talks about separating conventional ways and ways that work, such that leaders should be critical of harmful assumptions. For example, the binary assumption that slowness equals unproductivity is detrimental, as it undermines the necessity of time and patience in quality work.

2. Charity Manager: Lucinda Price

Lucinda described her leadership style as collaborative, encouraged by the flat structure of CCI. She was fascinated by the autonomy given and adored the liberating structure arrangement.

3. Artist: Hilary Cox Condron

Hilary talked about stepping back and letting people do their things, while at the same time becoming others' voice in advocating. For her, leadership is a collective process to nurture and reimagine human-nature interaction.

