Vidya Shah (00:00:05):

Hello, and welcome to another episode of season two of the UnLeading podcast series. We are ready to be in the questions of leadership as a way to continuously practice unleading our way towards more transformative possibilities for leadership. UnLeading invites us to consider what leadership looks like in times of crisis and contradiction, what it means to lead uncertain and unwritten futures and what it means to lead in ways that invite fundamental reorientations to how we understand ourselves as humans and our place in this larger ecosystem of life. That is why I'm so excited to introduce this topic and an amazing panel of speakers. If you wanna know more about the panelists, you can find their full bios and contact information on the UnLeading webpage at www.yorku.ca/edu/unleading. So this podcast is titled Leadership for Climate Justice, and we're gonna be focusing on climate justice as an intersectional approach to the climate crisis that moves beyond a focus on climate change. And as such, this podcast will unearth and undo who sees themselves as leaders in this work and will offer important frameworks for leading as intersectional justice. We consider the differential impact of the climate crisis on local and global communities and how we might understand and support those experiencing eco-anxiety related to the existential and physical threat of the climate crisis. We acknowledge the important role that Indigenous communities and youth have on this movement whilst not absolving the rest of us in our responsibilities to end climate injustice. Our conversations will engage us in reflexive inquiry as we consider who we need to be as leaders to lead for climate justice and how we apply these understandings to the work that we do in communities, in schools and the academy. As we have with all of our podcasts, we'll begin with an opening speaker who will frame the discussion. I'm so thrilled to introduce the amazing Maria Vamvalis, a holistic climate justice education educator, scholar, writer, facilitator, and community activist, whose life work is really to protect our lands and waters and all life in ways that demand a fundamental reorientation to who we are as humans and how we choose to live. Welcome to the podcast, Maria.

Maria Vamvalis (00:02:48):

Thank you so much, Vidya. It is a privilege to be with everyone involved in this conversation about enacting climate justice. I look forward to hearing all the different ways that we can each learn to unlead and center climate justice in our leadership in different contexts. Because I've been an educator primarily in the public school system, I bring those experiences and perspectives to this conversation. In addition to my own research on climate justice education, I'd like to start with an anecdote from my own teaching experience related to issues of climate change and climate justice from 20 years ago as a way to surface some themes related to climate justice more broadly, and to also highlight what this might involve within education systems. I wanna connect this anecdote to a current policy decision made this week from Ontario Education Minister, Stephen Lecce, to launch our conversation around unleading for climate justice. In my first year of teaching 20 years ago, I was teaching about climate change. The topic was not directly in the curriculum, but I did find ways to integrate it into science and social studies. As I tried to nurture a sense of environmental and social justice citizenship in my students, a parent of a student who worked in the oil and gas industry came to visit me after school one day, presenting me with a large book of industry funded research and evidence. I've got my quotations with evidence stating that I needed to teach both sides of the narrative of climate change. This was a deliberate tactic in fact of the fossil fuel industry to create doubt on the causes of climate change, to prolong meaningful climate action. And it's been outlined in greater detail by Naomi Oreskes and Michael Mann. Emily Eaton and Nick Day have written about the petro-pedagogies present in the Saskatchewan Education System, for example. They write that petro-pedagogies work to center, legitimate and entrench a set of beliefs related to climate change, energy and environmentalism that align with the interest and discourse of industry actors. Examples of these kinds of pedagogies are an overarching focus on individual carbon footprints and

energy conservation. Important issues, yes, reducing consumption and rethinking are energy needs are both important and absolutely necessary goals. But a focus here alone within education ultimately absolves systemic actors related to energy production and leaves fossil fuel interests and legacies largely uninterrogated. Yet, petro-pedagogies are but an extension and ongoing manifestation of what Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti calls quote, “the problematic patterns of north south relations”, the systemic complicities and harm in which our world has been configured as a result of legacies of oppression, colonization, imperialism, violence, militarism, white and human supremacy and extractivism. I've highlighted this encounter with the parent because it was a very particular everyday moment of the political and economic forces that were mobilized to create doubt, epistemic doubt, finding their way quite literally to my classroom, and even more intimately, to my curricular and pedagogical choices as an educator. I remember the vulnerability I felt as a teacher in my first year and recognized the important role educational policy plays in creating the conditions for social and ecological justice through education. Climate justice, more explicitly than climate action reflects the recognition that the adverse impacts of a warming climate are not experienced or caused equitably. This critical gaze is being extended to historically white and colonial environmental, educational and political movements for climate action, which are being influenced by longstanding activism from within racialized communities around environmental justice, as well as through Indigenous sovereignty and land reclamation movements. Additionally, calls for a more fully realized climate justice questions dominant understandings of economic growth and progress instead, advocating for deepened solidarity in disrupting normalized, racialized, capitalist, patriarchal, and colonial dynamics, while promoting visions for the future of rooted in greater justice and wellbeing within local communities and for all forms of life on the planet. Within Western educational contexts, climate justice education frames its citizens, which would include young learners, as profoundly implicated in the current climate crisis. This involves a deep interrogation of complicity and harm and how to shift those structural patterns of oppression and ways of being in the world. Arthur Manolo articulates the strong imperative to delink from the logic's underlying modernity through decolonization efforts. Interrupting the current economic system and its underlying colonial logics and unsustainability remain priority in creating diverse, empowering frameworks for climate justice leadership. A commitment to more critical, holistic and decolonizing approaches to climate change means supporting students in traversing deep differences in our respective ways of knowing and meaningfully learning about diverse knowledge systems, particularly Indigenous knowledge systems of this place and the particular context where learners find themselves. But, as Brigitte Evering asserts doing so is something current educational approaches around ecological literacy, rarely explore without privileging Western knowledge systems. The challenge to these encounters rests in what Verna St. Denis identifies as the deep structures of colonial discourse that are embedded within the traditional education system. These discourses tend to center on the individual, emphasize future readiness through the lens of economic productivity alone, rather than on justice-oriented forms of citizenship that center our relationships to ecological webs. These discourses have also perpetuated erasure of Indigenous and Black histories in particular, as has been powerfully articulated by Robin Maynard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in their stunning new book, oen I consider an essential read on climate justice, *Rehearsals For Living*. This brings me to Education Minister, Steven Leece’s recent decision to remove curricular opportunities for learners to understand the connections between Indigenous and Western science and to explore the scientific and technological knowledge systems and perspectives of various cultures. Within education, inadequate curricular responses to the climate crisis are overemphasizing scientific and technocratic solutions and imaginaries, at the expense of deeper engagements with both structural root causes and affective embodied experiences of both complicities and harm and transformative possibilities. What ways of knowing and being can support the healing of harm to ecological webs to each other and to ourselves? When asked about his decision, Minister Leece’s spokesperson justified this profound act of colonial erasure by

stating that the ministry quote," remains focused on ensuring Ontario students excel at the foundation of math, science, and reading so they can pursue good paying jobs." I was quite frankly, indignant by the cynicism of this statement in the context of both the recent international panel on climate change report and the global study published in *The Lancet* in September of 2021 that shows the marked rise in feelings of anxiety and distress in young people as a direct result of government inaction on climate change. Ironically, the Minister of Education is privileging Western science in the curriculum, yet ignoring empirical scientific evidence in his policy making. We need to point out these contradictions and expose the deeply unethical basis upon which these decisions rest. Furthermore, it is distinct Indigenous knowledge systems rooted in particular places that offer ways of knowing and being that deepen a sense of interconnection and support the development of a consciousness that understands our interrelationships with all forms of life, informing our actions from a place of decolonial solidarity. This is a form of genuine resilience when confronting climate altered realities and looking to both shift and adapt to them. It can lead to an expanded and deepened consciousness that rejects the illusion of modern capitalism and centers gratitude for the gifts of the biodiverse life on this planet. Our sense of interconnection is where peace love and justice can lay down roots, express through compassion and empathy for all beings made real in equitable structures and systems. Our deep compassion engagement with complexity and regenerated connections faced with what Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti calls, "the stamina sobriety, accountability, responsibility, and humility for shedding arrogance." This might enable us to become citizens otherwise on this precious aching planet and support our learners to create worlds as yet unimagined. I believe that climate justice is a framework for active reparation, restoration, and regeneration in our communities, both local and global.

Vidya Shah (00:13:12):

Wow, Maria, thank you so much. You know, it surprises me every time I listen to you and learn from you how much I'm learning. And I just wanna say thank you for that beautiful framing and for opening up this discussion in such an honest way that is linking to current educational shifts in Ontario. I really appreciate that. And we're also looking forward to hearing from you again at the end of the podcast and throughout at all if you wanna jump in, you know, that this place is yours as well. Folx, I'm so excited to continue and to build on this amazing introduction with four panelists who are doing tremendous work in various locations in community, in the academy and in schools. I'd like to welcome Cristina Delgado Vintimilla, an Assistant Professor at York University and a pedagogista under the Italian tradition. Welcome Crristina.

Cristina Delgado Vintimilla (00:14:12):

Thank you, Vidya, it's a lovely to be here. Thank you for this invitation.

Vidya Shah (00:14:17):

I'd like to also welcome Naomi Leung, a 19 year old Chinese Malaysian settler and climate and racial justice organizer with Climate Education Reform BC and Sustainabiliteens and a UBC student. Welcome Naomi.

Naomi Leung (00:14:30):

Thank you for inviting me as well. I'm excited to get into the chat.

Vidya Shah (00:14:34):

I'd like to also welcome Julius Lindsay. Julius is the Director of Sustainable Communities at the David Suzuki Foundation and co-founder of the Black Environmentalist Alliance. Welcome Julius.

Julius Lindsay (00:14:46):

Thanks for having me.

Vidya Shah (00:14:47):

I'd also like to welcome Jodie Williams, co-chair of the First Nation's Metis and Inuit Education of Ontario and the Indigenous Education Lead for the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board. Welcome Jodie.

Jodie Williams (00:15:01):

Hello, everyone. I'm very happy to be here.

Vidya Shah (00:15:03):

So folx, as we dive into this important conversation you're gonna be hearing from these four folx around a number of different themes. And the first one as we start with all of the podcasts is really this question of what does leading for climate justice look like in your everyday practice? What does it mean to lead for climate justice? And so, Jodie, I'd love to begin with you and hear your thoughts on this.

Jodie Williams (00:15:30):

Well, in the work that I'm mostly engaged in in education a lot of this is around helping to educate others to really understand, you know, the creating those links between our education system, climate change and moving into climate justice and colonialism. Most people in education we have huge learning gaps when it comes to understanding what's happened on these lands. We have a complete erasure in education systems. For example, you know, when we teach students in schools, what kind of maps do they see? You know, they'll learn about the map of Canada, they'll learn about provinces, maybe cities and towns. Do they ever get to see the Anishinaabek nation as an example or the Haudenosaunee Confederacy of Six Nations? So we've been completely erased and yet we're still here and not only are we still here, we have legal agreements with everyone else who's now living on these lands. And so right there, we have in education a huge problem of being erased and therefore, if we're not even on a map, then we don't even matter. So through this process of colonialism, education comes in as a tool of propaganda to hold up a narrative so that the general public don't know what's happened and what's continuing to happen on these lands. The difficult truth for so many to swallow is that Canada came into existence through genocide and land theft for the purpose of resource extraction. And that's what continues to go on to today resource extraction because that is what generates the almighty dollar. Our entire economic system is based on what we take out of the lands and now we're suffering a huge consequence to that. We had agreements that if you were going to be coming to live on these lands, that you had to follow our laws, which was not to be digging into the ground and extracting out because if you do that, you're gonna suffer a big consequence and this is where we're at today. And so before we even have a conversation about climate justice in education, which is where I reside, we have to back up the conversation to really get at the root causes of it and understanding that there's a direct correlation between colonialism and climate change. And so that's a big part of the work that I do and then the other part in that is trying to then balance that out that very difficult truth, which is very depressing, but it's not to say it's not without hope. And so the other big part of that is inspiring action to happen and I'll tell you where the action is happening, it's in the youth. It's the youth that are really taking the lead and I think in education, our job is to really empower them and support them and help ensure their voices are

getting are getting heard. And because this is what we're leaving behind as we think about the next generations coming up and how can a lot of the work that I'm in involved in directly is helping create spaces for their voices to be heard.

Vidya Shah (00:19:35):

Wow, Jodie, thank you so much, thank you so much. I so appreciate naming the direct correlation and links between colonialism and climate injustice and this idea of seeing land as separate something that can be owned, that can be taken, that can be extracted, that can be manipulated. I really appreciate you for setting this context and for naming the importance of youth in this context. I'd love to turn it over to Naomi actually. And Naomi would love to hear from you as a youth activist engaged in this work and what are your thoughts on what it means to lead for climate justice?

Naomi Leung (00:20:16):

It's a big question and I think a good one that needs to be reflected on every day, I think, as we come back and are a part of these movements, I think it's really easy to lose focus and to go from the thing to thing to thing as we work on different campaigns. And so, an important question, and I'm grateful that you're asking it. To me, I think as a young person, it's really easy to be hopeless and to engage with a lot of feelings like that because of how big these problems are and how powerless and small I can feel in the big scheme of things and I think that's a collective feeling. I think leading with climate justice first starts with letting ourselves hope. I think that's something and I also read a quote from Mariame Kaba yesterday about it in terms of how hope is a discipline. And it's a discipline that like, we need to revisit every day and practice. It's like hope is something that's really seen as naive and idealistic and maybe with a negative connotation sometimes, but I think hope is powerful and how we create change is by imagining the world that we wanna see and working with each other to build small pockets of that. And that's really powerful and it's important that we let ourselves hope. And I think that's something I've been trying to remind myself of. And it's been something I've definitely learned from people like adrienne maree brown and a lot of Indigenous local nations. So let first, I think letting myself hope and letting myself know that we can, we have agency and that we can be a part of change and that everybody matters in moving towards climate justice and everybody's needed in moving towards climate justice. Whether, like for instance, I started this work when I was 17 and I really came into the movement with this imposter syndrome feeling like I had no skills, no prior knowledge and nothing to bring to the movement. And I think that's where it's really important to speak to youth in terms of like how important and valuable they are and how they deserve to be believed in. And that there are youth just like them already in this movement and whether or not, for instance, like with the media, media tends to center a lot of white voices. And the past few years, it's been a lot of like centering white youth voices as opposed to, you know, a lot of Indigenous, Black and communities of colour with a lot of youth organizers and land defenders who've been doing this work far longer than a lot of white youth. I think it's really important to honour those voices and to seek out those voices and not only to tokenize them, but to really listen. I think another thing with being youth is that we are often named as these inspiring people. And I think that's great, but we also want to be listened to, and we also want to be taken seriously. And I've really seen that in my life, how powerful other youth campaigners have been. And it's been really like women of colour, trans people of colour, queer people who've been a part of my life and been a part of I guess, shaping how I understand climate justice every day. And I think they've been the ones who have really welcomed me to the movement. And I hope to do the same to any young person or any adult listening right now that I'd encourage you to believe in youth, believe in queer youth, disabled youth, BIPOC trans youth, and invite them to this movement because their voices matter in this movement and they're needed in this movement. And climate justice really looks like engaging like Jodie

said so well in resisting capitalism and colonialism. I think it's really important to center on these two systems because often also the narrative is that it's about individual action and Maria really talked about this in a good way as well. I think every day it's important to understand like the scope of the problem and I think trying to be a small part of it is really important because I think again, because these problems are so big, it's easy to be overwhelmed by them, but I think as we take collective action and as we center on collective action, which is really what is going to be the most impactful. I think engaging together in healing work, in mutual aid, in understanding who is hurt most by climate change right now, how can we help those people while also advocating for policy change and holding elected officials accountable on municipal, provincial, and national levels. And so I think those are good ways to take climate action every day. But really also just trying our best, trying to process and really letting ourselves grieve the emotions and the things that we've lost and that we're losing and that we are going to lose. I think it's really important to let ourselves grieve that and maybe not to always stay in the grief because there's also hope and joy and ways to move towards collective liberation. And I think it's just a matter of learning to hold multiple emotions at once, ones that are overwhelming the ones that are also hopeful. And I guess leading for climate justice looks like choosing to try to be hopeful and being a part of change every day.

Vidya Shah (00:26:44):

Wow, Naomi, thank you, thank you so much for that. The complexity of weaving in the emotional experience of this existential crisis that are in with the importance of holding multiple emotions at the same time and believing in and investing in youth and seeing them as leaders of this movement, not in a patronizing. I loved what you said about, you know, don't look at us as being inspiring, look to us for leadership on this issue and believe us and follow us, I think is so important. So thank you for naming the landscape and the complexities of what it means to lead for climate justice in this time. Julius, I'd love to hear from you on this question, your thoughts on leading for climate justice, what that means to you.

Julius Lindsay (00:27:31):

I wanna just kind of boost what Jodie and Naomi said. In particular like for leading for climate justice, for me is about decolonizing the actual movement and like climate action, part of the reason why the movement operates and the way that operates and the reasons why we raise certain people as the voices of the movement or the people that we should be listening to is because of colonialism. And we think about, you know, I spent the past 15 years working in government, like from a government perspective, public engagement is something government does every day, but you know, citizens are seen as, not much more than nuisances that are impediments to what they actually want to do. And so part of taking climate action is about de-centering government, is about de-centering the power structures that we operate within and many, I work in many different climate spaces ,where the movement is centering those spaces or centering those power structures. And I think, you know, the work that I'm doing and the way that I look at, you know, leading for climate justice, taking climate action is about hearing from people that are traditionally not heard from. I also really liked what Naomi said about youth are leaders and when we think about youth and marginalized folks and Indigenous people as leaders, and not as, not even as voices we need to hear, then it changes the way that we do climate action, the way we think about climate action. There's that saying that you can't dismantle the master's house using the master's tools. Like we are stuck in a paradigm where we're using the master's tools to try and dismantle the master's house and even the concept of, we are in the master's house is ultimately colonial. And so a lot of the work that I'm currently doing in the work, that I've done over the past years centers around public engagement and you know, hearing from many different people, how do you hear from many different groups? How do you center the voices of those that are most

marginalized? I've spent 10 years working in cities and I've never attended a city public engagement event ever that I was not sort of working at as a city staff person. And part of that is cause you know, I have two kids, I have a job, I have a mortgage, I have extended family, I have two organizations that I'm a part of and a third major project that I'm working on. Like I'm just busy and so how do you engage the busy people? How do you engage the people who, you know, they might have to be working 12 hour days just to make it through, like how do you engage those people? How do you hear their voices? Cause many of those people are the ones that are gonna be disproportionately affected by climate change. I remember being on a on a webinar and there was a federal government person who attended a session on climate change in Toronto's St. James neighbourhood. And you know, he was speaking about the fact that like he sat there and listened to these youth talk about climate action. He said it was the most nuanced, in depth analysis of climate action in the City of Toronto that he'd ever heard. And he was like, you know, these are not PhDs, these are not academics, these were, you know, youth that were living in their neighbourhood and they were not just giving their views, they were giving in depth, nuanced analysis about the issues and solutions that were needed to be enacted. And I think, you know, we often prioritize a PhD, we prioritize the minister, we prioritize government or policy. When, you know, there are lots of things, government policy will never tell us whether we drive to the supermarket or we walk to the supermarket. And so when we think about climate action, we think about climate justice we have to think differently about how we engage people and even what are those solutions and who are those solutions prioritizing? We often talk about [electric vehicles] EVs as one of the solutions to climate change and often when people talk and having worked in government, you know, when talk about EVs, the stat of like 80% of the people who charge their vehicles charge a vehicle at homes so that's the paradigm that we're working under. But you also have to think about 80% of the people who own EVs are ones who bought Teslas and who own their home. And so what about the person who doesn't own their home and what person who owns their home and can't afford to put in a charging station? What about the person who doesn't own their home? What about the person whose car is their home? How is this paradigm shift centering those people? And how are we thinking about taking climate action to serve those people and not to serve the Tesla owner who owns their own home, who lives in downtown Toronto? And so that justice piece is really about thinking beyond our current paradigms, thinking about beyond the people that we currently center and thinking beyond the current power structures that we operate in to imagine what that possible future could be.

Vidya Shah (00:32:27):

I just love that Julius, thank you so much. And you know, this idea of how people are going to be disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis. And also, who are we listening to? Whose knowledge and expertise are we centering in this conversation are such important questions for us to continue to sit with. And I think often, you know, the hierarchical nature of how leadership has been, how folks have been socialized into leadership, in education, in community settings, it does such disservice to what becomes possible in this world because the assumption is that knowledge rests in the few that are at the "top", and so much of the answers and the ways of knowing and being that are actual answers to or maybe part answers to these very complex issues that we're dealing with, never get heard and never get acknowledged and never get validated. And so I wanna just, you know, thank you for raising that, where are we locating leadership and where are we locating knowledge in terms of how we understand and address these issues? Cristina, would love to hear from you on this question as well. What does it mean to lead for climate justice?

Cristina Delgado Vintimilla (00:33:38):

I think I engage with this question from, you know, my small field of experience and my small ability to act. And for me that is education and particularly, pedagogy as a body of living knowledge that tries to think education and in my life, in my work in Canada, what that means for me is to engage with a variety of people that are already in education or that are becoming part of education through, you know, their own education, like what we do in the faculty and engaging with what it seems to be a bit of the passion and education, which is to stay and to perpetuate the status quo. So I think that how it looks for me is to try to create conditions inside university classrooms and also outside in other communities, for example, in the Oaxaca community in Canada, where we can engage with conversations that can make us a bit suspicious of this status quo. I have had many times experience of students, future teachers telling me that they don't understand what is the problem, the system works really well, right. So there is a passion I think, in education to keep going as it is. And for me, leading for climate change means engaging with that and trying to destabilize it, unsettle it in some ways. The other aspect of my work is very close to my heart is at home. I am a woman from the Andes and I work there with Indigenous and communities and Campesino Communities to, on one hand unsettle and trouble, and also understand the intricate, monstrous work of Canadian neo-colonialism through mining corporations, Canadian mining corporations that are trying to come to Andean lands, very close to my town and destroy it because it has to work in a very difficult project to figure out how do we even start responding and resisting and how can we do this alongside, alongside young children and women. On the other hand, I also joined other Campesino Communities and other Indigenous women and children to try to create spaces where we can actually acknowledge that ancestral knowledges, our knowledges that are legitimate and that those ancestral knowledges can respond to climate change and to the ecological crisis in which we exist. The problem is that the very, the background against which they measure themselves and every single thing that happens every day is capitalism. And I think one thing that happens in Latin America is that we exist in subjectivities that can exist in the contradictions, and in contradictions that are not going to be solved. And actually I think that they don't want to be solved, you know, that we can be in conversation within those contradictions and to try to find paths for otherwise futures. I think overall for me, is trying every day to figure out how do we engage in conversations and education so that education remembers that the idea was not to keep going with the same status quo, but creating conditions for livable futures for otherwise futures, for just futures.

Vidya Shah (00:38:07):

Cristina, thank you so much. This idea that maybe the contradictions don't want to be solved is such an important one. And I think, you know, so much of this idea of leading for climate justice is the ability to be in those contradictions and to not lose ourselves in the contradictions and it just making me think about, you know, the actual contradiction being such a site for generativity, for conversation, for dialogue, for deepening a sense of who we are and who we wanna be in the world. I so appreciate that. It's making me think about a whole bunch of things and, you know, it leads nicely into this sort of next part or this next question around how does leading for climate justice disrupt normative ideas of schooling and leadership and, you know, for all of you sort of doing this work, what challenges do you face in leading in this way? What are you up against? And I think this speaks, it's a nice sort of jump off point from what Cristina was sharing. You know, so again, what normative ideas is it challenging and what challenges do you face as leaders that are leading for this work? Jodie, would love to hear from you on this.

Jodie Williams (00:39:25):

Ideology, the ideology that is perpetuated through the education system. So think about what we tell kids, you know, they come into elementary school very young, very connected to the land, filled with

ideas, just incredible creative minds, natural explorers, questions, like just amazing. You ever ask like a kid in kindergarten, like what is a tree saying? And they'll tell you, they'll be able to tell you what the tree is saying. And then we start to move through school and by the time kids hit high school, and my background is in secondary about over 20 years in secondary education. And by the time they hit secondary, they're not asking questions anymore and their mindset is of, what do I need to do to get the grade, to get to the next level. And then even in our language, you know, the language in schools that reinforce hierarchies and what's considered valued and what's devalued. “Oh, you're gonna move up to academic, you're gonna move down streams of choices in terms of where you're going. And so what does that say when we even use language like that in education. But the big one, and it's the biggest lie that's told is that you need, in order to be happy, you need to have a really good job. That's why you're going to school. That's why you gotta go to post secondary to get the better job. That's why in order to be happy, you gotta get a really good job so that you can make a lot of money so that you can buy stuff. And if you have enough stuff, then that's gonna determine your value. That's gonna determine what your worth, how people view you. And then if you have enough stuff and you follow that, then you'll be happy. And usually people, you know, realize maybe in their late seventies or eighties, that that was a complete lie because you can never get to the future because we're only existing in the moment. And so that lie, that ideology that has been reinforced over and over and over again, makes it very difficult because it's so deeply ingrained. It's very difficult to move away from that. When people come to these lands and this is no different, this could be any anywhere. You know, if I was to go to somebody else's homelands, it would be foolish, it would be unimaginable for me to just move over to somebody else's lands and then start dictating to them, “Oh, no, you gotta think this way, and you gotta learn this way and you gotta do things this way.” That's just rude and wrong, but that's what's been happening here and, you know, we've been living here. Indigenous knowledge systems did not end in climate change and so Indigenous knowledge systems, and when I say that, it also mean the languages, our languages hold the code on how to live on these lands. Just like if we were to go to some other land, the languages from those lands holds the code on how to live sustainably, on how to live in balance. Our entire backyard, like when we step into our backyard kids should know when they go into a forested area, they should know what the medicinal value and the purposes of those plants because in our mindset, we don't just extract and retain and take and accumulate. It's just because that's an insane idea because that ends in death and so here we are, right? And so it's these ideologies that continue to perpetuate in our education system. And we see this as mentioned in the beginning with the minister removing Indigenous content out of the science curriculum with the rationale of, we want kids learning science, math, and having jobs. What does that then say about the idea of Indigenous knowledge? “Oh, it's got nothing to offer, oh, it's irrelevant, it's just fluffy.” And so really what's happening is we have one narrative that continues to be upheld and until we find ways to finally bust through that and decenter that single dangerous narrative that only benefits some people, change isn't gonna happen. But, you know, I don't wanna leave it on a doom and gloom because one of the things I wanna give an example of here, I know we're on a podcast, so everybody's gonna have to close their eyes and imagine this. But I'm in a conservation area right now for a program with students learning on the land. And we took them down to this area and the land that we are currently on maybe 60, 70 years ago was all farmlands. And in, you know, that's kind of a short amount of time. It's very, you know, quite forested now. And it looks, you would never guess that there are farmlands here. And so this one area used to have kind of like a little tiny creek, very, very small. So if you can picture a small little creek. And one beaver came into this area and set up a dam, and this little creek is now this incredible ecosystem. It's incredible. So we took kids out there and we're showing them like the wildlife that is there, the incredible changes to this one particular spot, one beaver. And so, you know, that's where we also wanna leave this kind of hope and inspiration that despite all of this that's happening, despite the government refusing to do what's right, we know that on the ground, grassroots is where the change is gonna happen. And it does, you know, and one person can make a big difference.

So collectively we can, you know, create these changes. And last thing I just wanna say is like, for us as an Anishinaabek, our leaders are the animals. You know, like our government system is the earth. So, you know, we have a lot to offer in terms of thinking differently and also bringing back that, to reconnect because when people, and it doesn't matter who you are, where you're from, it's the connection that we've lost. We're so disconnected that's why we buy into the ideology, but the more we get out on the land, it helps, it moves us back. It reconnects us, it pulls us away from that, the mental illness of needing to have all this stuff in order to be happy. So that's what I wanted to share. Thank you.

Vidya Shah (00:46:31):

Ah, Jodie, that's so beautiful, thank you so much. The idea that the land has a code, that lands have codes for living and living well and living sustainably. And the idea that animals and other creatures are teachers. They are leaders, they are leading this movement. I think often about, you know, COVID-19 and COVID-19 had a mind of its own, that virus is leading us in all kinds of ways. And how we choose to learn from that leadership you know, says a lot about how we're, what we're willing to think about and gain and learn in this time. Thank you so much for sharing that. I'd love to also hear from Cristina on this, on this question. Cristina, thoughts you have about what leading for climate justice challenges and the challenges that you face in a leader leading in this way.

Cristina Delgado Vintimilla (00:47:29):

I couldn't agree more with Jodie. I call it neoliberalism and, you know, an education system given completely to neoliberalism. That's the biggest challenge. I think that we face, I mean, I know there are others, but the idea that we need to use the logic of the market for everything in all the realms of our lives and how much education is a system for that. And also, you know, one of the challenges I think we face is that, and you know, this very well Vidya, I think that when it comes, for example, to teacher education, we teach people that have been educated for 12 years already in school systems. And they come to the classroom with an understanding of what education already is. And often that is that understanding of education, that is the very education that I think in this podcast, we are trying to unsettle.

Vidya Shah (00:48:28):

Thank you so much, Cristina, and this idea of neoliberalism. Again, this idea that all of our decisions are governed by and are controlled by the values of the market that we are, you know, creating school systems that support people that can come out as competitive workers in the 21st century, are now 22nd century, that are thinking about, you know, jobs and this push for, for those of you, for whom neoliberalism is a new term. Please also check out the UnLeading podcast website where we do sort of define it more thoroughly there, and questions around how can education and schooling be centered around practices of, and commitments to self actualization, to community, building, to citizenship, to thinking about ourselves as humans in a global world and part of much larger ecosystems, what does it mean to actually center education in those ways? Thank you so much, Cristina. Julius, I'd love to hear from you on this question, challenges that you face in leading for climate justice and what you're challenging in doing so.

Julius Lindsay (00:49:37):

Yeah, I think I also want to really applaud what Jodie said and even jump off of something that you just said in terms of like, we are building an education system that's making people ready for the market in the 22nd century, I would sort of say, is our education preparing anybody for the job system in the 22nd

century? Because like the job system that we have now is much different. And the ways in which the conversation typically happens is for the job system of the 1950s, not the job systems in 2022. And so I think there needs to be a fundamental even questioning of like, you know, is our normative ideas, schooling even suited to what our 2022 world looks like? I think another way of that disruption of the normative ideas, but also a way that, a challenge that I definitely face is that idea of like the, for lack of better term, the commons, or you know I'll use what Jodie said around what nature as our leaders, you know, animals are our leaders, like it's thinking beyond ourself and thinking beyond society as a bunch of individuals to society as a community and what that actually means. Even at the, what you just said in response to what Cristina said. And so a lot of leading for climate justice is around that raising of multiple voices and not as I said, earlier, not focusing on that traditional expert or what does that even mean expert, you know, and the centering of Western science and the centering of traditional, you know, leadership. I was thinking after I spoke the first time about the fact that I recently watched some podcasts and some reporting again on Vancouver's zoning bylaw. And so the zoning bylaw sort of governs where buildings go, roads go, and how uses are being used in the city, like what you can do on your property and how you do it. And the zoning bylaw in Vancouver was written in 1913 and looks pretty much identical to what it did was like in 1913. And so you could imagine that type of system, the type of exclusion that was happening in Vancouver in 1913, when that zoning bylaw was created and is still governing the cities today, and is a large driver for the reason why Vancouver is a very expensive city. And then when you look at Vancouver zoning bylaw, and you compare it to Toronto's or Mississauga's or Richmond Hill's or Vaughan's, it looks almost identical. And so you can think about how, like we are governing our system, our cities, and we are trying to take climate action on a paradigm of leadership that is based in 1913. And our planners who are working in cities are being trained in a paradigm that was created in 1913. And so that's one of the biggest challenges is, you know, in, the work that I did when I was working in cities. I was often sitting at the table with planners and challenging sort of their idea that, you know, good planning means that we're gonna be sustainable and we're gonna be equitable and blah, blah, blah. And it's like, well, when I think about your training and the paradigms that you're working in, that is actually false. And so and as well, like the idea that you are an expert and you are more educated than the people in the city about what should happen in the city and, and not even to speak of, you know, the fact that we are all settlers and, and you know, we should be listening to Indigenous voices is, stands in direct opposition to the way they were trained, how they do their work and the way that they think, and the way in which cities and communities in our society operate. And so for me, like challenging those normative ideas of who's an expert, and how are we hearing voices, and what does that actually mean? And how are we actually, and what are the underlying structures of the systems that we've created that we kind of take for granted? Cristina said something about like the market solving our problems, like a, what are the, like the market was not created to be equal, to raise everybody. The market was created to make a few people rich and to, and to exploit a whole bunch of other people. And, you know, these are the structures that our system operates under. Even I was part of a conversation and there was somebody talking about progressives and how they were losing two conservatives because progressives were not putting forward any ideas that were challenging the status quo. And I was like, well you know, there are lots of BIPOC, queer, other marginalized group progressive groups that have been putting forward challenges to the status quo for years. It's just that they're not centered. They are not important. They are not heard in the normative conversations that we have. And so you know, who is a leader? Why are they a leader? Who are we listening to? And what are the sort of underlying systems that underline our world and how does white supremacy, colonialism, capitalism, you know, what does it actually mean? And how do they actually operate our world, as opposed to, you know, just assuming that, or just taking for granted that that's the way things have to be or should be or need to be, and that they are somehow pinnacle of human society is a really important place to lead from. And the amount of really interesting and really possible solutions that can come from listening to

more than just “experts” is tantamount. I've been using this example over the past few weeks often, you know, the MP3 came from some guy watching Star Trek and saw Captain Picard listening to music on demand on the TV, and he was like, I want to do that. And so he came up with this program to create an MP3 that totally disrupted the whole music industry. And he wasn't a leader, he wasn't in the music industry, he was just a guy who was like, I want to be able to listen to music on my own. And so when we're not centering many voices, when we're not hearing from many different people, how many of those amazingly disruptive ideas, not to mention the fact that we listen to people who have, you know, who are disenfranchised, but have the most experience and the most knowledge about how to operate in these systems and in our world, like how many amazing ideas we're missing out on because we're centering experts and we're centering these systems that ultimately do not work for majority of our society.

Vidya Shah (00:56:43):

Julius, I just love this, you know, and thank you for framing the 1913 paradigm piece. It invites us to question like where have these paradigms originated that we are steeped in, that we are committed to, that we are perpetuating, that we are upholding every single day. And what are the particular ways and expressions that those paradigms get expressed in our in our world? It makes me think about the scholarship of Kevin Kumashiro, who is an anti-oppression scholar. He's one of my mentors. And often, you know, talks about the importance of connecting the dots. Like, what are the dots as to how, where we are currently, how we got here? What are the patterns? What is the map? And how do we offer people, some sort of a mapping of a framework that helps them understand what are the frameworks that we are operating in? What are the logics, what are the mechanics, what are the ways in which the, and the particular ways in which these systems of oppression operate in particular spaces is, I think such an important framing for us to think about. And then to offer back alternative ways, and not even alternative, these are just often silenced and erased ways of knowing of Indigenous communities around the world. How do we offer back, as Cristina has shared here in the chat, how do we legitimize alternative onto-epistemologies is such an important and different, difficult question, right? How do we legitimize alternative different centered silenced ways of knowing and ways being that have literally been erased from schooling, from society? I'd love to hear as well from Naomi on this question. Naomi, what are some challenges that you're up against in doing this work? And what do you think that your leadership and climate justice is challenging around normative ideas?

Naomi Leung (00:58:35):

Yeah, and I really appreciate this space and the knowledge that everybody has shared. I'm definitely going to need to take more time to reflect and think about this knowledge that's like really sacred and I appreciate it. I think climate justice really disrupts normative ideas of schooling and leadership because like ultimately climate justice requires collective liberation. Meaning that it acknowledges how our freedom is interconnected and it centers on not leaving anyone behind. And so this includes advocating for Indigenous sovereignty, Black liberation, trans justice, justice for disabled people. And I guess as we see our schools right now, a lot of the people and the movements that I just mentioned, people have not been able to feel safe in their schools because it's really been built on colonialism and neoliberal capitalism, like others have mentioned, like Cristina and others on this call. I think it's really interesting to see how the disconnection between like people and the earth has been really intentional in schools, almost. As we get older, we spend more serious time in classrooms, studying books, instead of not saying that's bad thing cause it's always, you know, good to read and to learn from past histories and things like that, but the separateness from the earth. And I think the knowledge and the wisdom that the earth and you know, a lot of other nature and species have is ultimately, I didn't really learn that much about

climate change or climate solutions really in elementary or high school. And I definitely didn't learn about climate justice and that really took its toll both on my mental health and as many with many other youth. I think it takes a form of climate anxiety when they see like in the media, in news from their peers, like just how climate change is affecting them in their communities, to then have this huge gap in schools. It's really frustrating and again, disempowering. And so it's really hard to take the radical action that we need, especially when people don't fully understand the problem of climate change or understand how climate justice must be a part of its solutions as well as Indigenous sovereignty, as well as Land Back as well as, you know, the interconnections to other movements for justice. And especially because these are topics that are politicized and then dismissed, it really serves climate delay. And so I think that's a huge challenge right now and especially when Ministries of Education, including the ones that you've mentioned earlier, and the BC Ministry of Education because I reside in so-called British Columbia, that's more of what I'm familiar with. When they, you know, choose to delay including climate justice in the curriculum or including more Black histories that center Canadian Black history, I think it's really speaking to what they value. And I think why they're delaying that type of action and that type of change also speaks again to like volumes to the knowledge that they want to center. And so that's why myself and a few other peers in high school, we developed this campaign called Climate Education Reform BC. We are a youth-led organization across so-called British Columbia really advocating that the BC K to 12 curriculum and educational system include climate justice, include anti-oppression and to give support to teachers and educators in doing so, and ultimately to empower youth to be a part of climate solutions. And I think from a lot of community discussions, what we're really acknowledging now is that climate justice education is really this wonderful opportunity. And I think it's often easy to be like, oh, like, I mean, and it makes a lot of sense, and I understand for teachers, they have so much going on. And so it's really, really difficult to feel like you need to add something else. But I think climate justice is really transformative because it's something that can, like this framework is something else that can transform how people understand and see the world and how they can be a part of creating change. And so, rather than like viewing it as like something additional though, like maybe it will require like additional knowledge, I think it's really important to do that because it's an opportunity to support and empower youth to be a part of again, climate solutions and to give them the technical skills and knowledge that they need to build the futures that they wanna see and also to transform the world that is really hurt. And I think feels very disastrous all the time. If you, I guess aren't engaging in like healing work. And so in the, you know, the next 10 to 20 years and onwards, like what schools are really going to need to focus on as well is disaster risk reduction in terms of, we're seeing our communities like with British Columbia this past year, the past two years, we've been hit by, you know, really deadly climate heat domes. We've seen flooding happen in a lot of communities and we've seen Indigenous, Black and rural and lower income communities feel the worst of these impacts. I think schools are at a really unique point right now in ways that they bring people together and they can build mutual aid networks that are going to be very important and really critical now and, and in the future. And so I think we're at again, a really unique point in terms of creating those systemic changes that we need to build an educational system that centers climate justice. It is going to require change, but the change is going to be worth it and it's gonna be worth investing into these futures. And so some systemic changes that are going to need to happen are giving educators more resources and support and training and funding to teach about climate justice and to not only center knowledge, that is about the environment or about science, but that also centers justice and climate justice in terms of equitable climate solutions, in terms of engaging in local climate action and climate emergency plans. And also doing this in a trauma informed way and teaching youth how to hold and process and understand the emotions that they're feeling, as they're really overwhelming, again. It's such an opportunity, and I know, for instance, if you take even like one classroom time to talk about, how do you feel when you hear about climate change? What supports do you need? And then introducing climate justice, like how could this change how you understand climate

change and looking at, you know, past histories, like how have campaigns won and how can we build campaigns to create change now? I think schools often talk about creating change makers, but I don't know if they're always giving them the skills that they need to do that. And I think there's been a lot of good work. I know in British Columbia and BC curriculum to create critical thinkers. And I wanna thank educators who are listening for doing that and being a part of that because you're doing such important and valuable work and I think, often undervalued work, but I'd also encourage you to take this wonderful opportunity to teach about climate justice because it's life changing. I think ultimately climate justice really requires decolonization, it requires anti-racism, it requires critiques of capitalism and colonialism, it also empowers students to be a part of community solutions, which are not isolated projects, but that are ongoing, that are regenerative and that can, you know, that they can see the fruits of their labour as opposed to a lot of projects now that are isolated, and then you kind of just like recycle them and you're like, “Oh, well, that was great. I learned so much.” And then, you know, there's a lot of ways and a lot of youth power and knowledge that can be built and sustained through helping and empowering youth to be a part of local climate solutions and to see how they can be a part of really collective change and changing that narrative again from individual action into understanding how collective action and community action is how we're going to achieve climate justice. And interestingly, I also had this conversation with an environmental teacher named Brandon Chan yesterday, and we were talking about like building curriculum for students. He really brought up this great point in how universities also need to change in the prerequisites that they value and that they credit in terms of crediting environmental 12 courses in looking for, you know, just different types of courses that create climate champions and really valuing those is going to be important as we transform education in these next few years as well. I guess the last thing I would say is that as we build movements for change now, I think it's important to communicate to youth that they're not alone in fighting for these things, that intergenerational organizing, intergenerational solidarity and intergenerational love is how we are going to win. And I think giving them the tactics that they need in order to build the campaigns for justice are going to be really important and that's gonna happen from learning from history in terms of like the civil rights movement, in terms of like how campaigns are winning locally right now, and I think that's how climate justice can hopefully change schooling.

Vidya Shah (01:10:16):

Thank you so much, Naomi. It's such a beautiful envisioning of what curriculum and pedagogy can be in schools. And I wanna just highlight this idea of the place of emotions in this entire conversation that this it's deeply difficult. And I know Maria, I invited her to guest speak in one of my classes, and that was the first question she asked, was how does it feel? How are you processing this? And it was such a profound question for so many students because we don't really talk about that. Maria, I'd love to hear from you any thoughts that you have on this question as well.

Maria Vamvalis (01:10:54):

Well, I think that this idea of working with emotions and being more holistic in our approach is really important. And, you know, I think about it in the educational context and I'm not suggesting, you know, that that teachers become therapists in that sense, there's a lot going on, and there's a lot of there's many different issues that are affecting young people in terms of the response to the pandemic and just multiple, you know, intersectional issues that affect them. But I think that if we did actually find ways, whether they were arts based more holistic approaches to allowing those emotions to have a place rather than I think sometimes what we do is we tend to disconnect and keep everything at more of the cognitive or intellectual level. But allowing, you know, that space for students and not being afraid of feelings, not being afraid and knowing that they do shift in teaching that emotional literacy you know,

can actually be so empowering so that you don't, you realize that yes, sometimes you will feel the grief, you will feel the despair, but it can change and move. And let's look at the strategies that do that. And sometimes it's that collective approach of talking about it and realizing you're not alone, you know, just like we have these collective structures, there's a lot of collective emotions. And so we can find ways to frame it in those ways and do things, different kinds of rituals, you know, different approaches through the arts, moving things through the body, getting, as Jodie talked about, sometimes just being on the land is the remembrance of these different ways of being. So, yeah, that's what I would like to say is let's not be afraid of the emotions and in the work that we do.

Vidya Shah (01:12:48):

Hmm, I just love that, thank you so much, Maria, thank you. And I know that as we come up with our last question here, just thinking about, you know, I'd love to hear final thoughts from folx on what are the possibilities that we're living into in leading for climate justice? And what's one thing that you hope listeners will take away from today's conversation. So let's begin with Naomi.

Naomi Leung (01:13:12):

Thanks, yeah, I think the possibilities feel endless in a world where I guess together we're moving towards and fighting for love and for each other, I think there's so much with that. And there's so many regenerative futures that we can imagine, that we can work towards and that really centers on not leaving people behind and that includes racialized, Indigenous, Black and communities of colour. And I think it's also important to credit these same communities who've been at the front lines and to really center their voices. I think it was like 15 or 30% of projected Canadian and American greenhouse gas emissions didn't happen because of Indigenous resistance, so I think it's important to center that. I guess for leaders, I would just encourage you to, especially elected leaders and people in government and people in with power and decision making power, I just encourage you to fight for Indigenous sovereignty, Land Back, Black liberation and liberation for all people and just join us in this fight and be accountable to your community and be invested in mutual aid.

Vidya Shah (01:14:37):

Beautiful, thank you, Naomi, thank you for that. Julius, would love to hear from you final thoughts.

Julius Lindsay (01:14:43):

Yeah, just super quickly and building off of what Naomi said. I think a lot of what Naomi said just starts from decentering yourself, I think that has to do with distributing power, that has to do with validating people's knowledge other than yourself that is not sort of traditional Western knowledge, but I think that a really important first step and I've seen this happen multiple times over the recent past, like really first step is decentering yourself. It's not about you and centering the collective. And I think that's a really important part of climate justice. I think that's a really important part of how we are going to get to the future that we need to get to. And so, leaders it's, you know, decenter yourself. It's not about you.

Vidya Shah (01:15:30):

Love it, thank you so much, thank you so much. Cristina would love to hear from you final thoughts.

Cristina Delgado Vintimilla (01:15:35):

I think my final thoughts would be a call for all of us that are involved in education to really take a good look at how disjointed and disconnected education is from the environmental violence and crisis in

which we exist. And to take actively the question of what does it mean to create an educational system that is trying to work with processes that will allow livable futures? And I think that for me, it's very important that this stays as a question, rather than as something that we already know how it looks like and what it is. I think that for me, my efforts, at least in education, I find them quite modest because it's about the labouring every day into figuring out these questions, rather than thinking that we know where we have to go and we just have to arrive there and things will be better once we can, you know, once we have done it. Because that is the history of education, thinking that we just have to find the right recipe and then we will ham into the perfect future. Yeah, that will be my final thoughts.

Vidya Shah (01:17:04):

I love it, I love it. Thank you, Cristina. And Jody, over to you, final thoughts and what you hope people will take away from this conversation.

Jodie Williams (01:17:12):

Whether we know it or not, we are deeply and intimately connected with this beautiful world and this beautiful universe. We are all people that are intimately connected. We have an amazing opportunity to pause and rethink what that really means and just, you know, the possibilities of reconnecting and feeling, the beauty that that has to offer is what comes out of this really important, and I would even say sacred work that's being done. Because what we do to the earth we do to ourselves, we see it in our bodies. So when we get out of the way, all we don't have to do, we don't actually have to do anything. We just have to get out of the way. The earth will look after itself. And I think if we wanna look for really brilliant leaders, we look to the five year olds and the six year olds, they have the answers. So those are my thoughts for today. Thank you.

Vidya Shah (01:18:25):

Oh, I just love it, I love it. What an amazing panel folks, you know, ideas of deep interconnectedness, ideas of interdependent and mutual aid, ideas of decentering ourselves as humans and seeing ourselves as part of much larger ecosystems, getting out of the way as Jodie's sharing, you know, such important ways of us thinking about who we can be and how we can lead together through some of the most difficult times that that are ahead. And I wanna thank you all for such important insights and conversations and Cristina, to your invitation, to be in the questions of this, that there's not an arrival point that we can reach at, but it's the process of being in the questions, being in multiple questions that might offer new questions. That very process is the work. Thank you all so much. And I'm gonna turn it over to Maria now. Maria, we'd love to hear your thoughts as you've been listening to this conversation, a summary of this discussion.

Maria Vamvalis (01:19:27):

Thanks so much Vidya, it was really incredible to hear all of these different perspectives around climate justice. And I think, you know, getting these different perspectives really brings some core ideas forward that are really resonating for me. One of them is about rethinking paradigms and really looking at this issue from different lenses. So, you know, we heard from Naomi, this really critical piece around centering youth and youth, not being tokenistic and not just being this source of inspiration, but you know, and I've certainly found in my own experience and through my own research that, you know, youth are educators and leaders, like youth at this point are like public educators in that sense of they're educating the public about these issues. And so when you're thinking about unleading and whose voices are we putting forward, this idea of shifting the paradigm that youth very much are leaders when it

comes to climate justice is really, really important. I feel like Jodie really grounded us in terms of the kind of paradigm shifts around coloniality that we have to stop seeing climate change as just a matter of greenhouse gas emissions. I mean, of course, yes, that the greenhouse gas emissions and the carbon is ultimately what is influencing the rise in temperatures, but what are the mindsets that are actually driving that? And it so much has to do with the land dispossession, the extractivism, the coloniality that are these root causes. And I feel like Jodie's perspectives really challenged us to really make those links much more explicit and really understand and interrogate the education system, you know, as partly very much a colonial project. And so what does it mean to unlead within education, decolonize and uncolonize there? For me, Julius, one of the things that really stood out is rethinking these paradigms of privilege, particularly as they relate to policy. So when we're just centering, you know, privilege perspectives in policy, we're missing a whole lot of things. As he talked about, like who's affording the Tesla's versus like when we're centering climate policy that addresses, you know, these issues of privilege and inequity, we're going to come up with some very different policies within our local communities. And that's, I think what climate change ultimately is also calling folx to do, is to think about who's being most impacted and what do they need. And, you know, Cristina is about rethinking these paradigms of human supremacy is one of the really key ideas that came out for me. So being very much attentive to these entanglements with the natural world and these contexts that we're in and that challenges some of those logics of separation that I think colonialism really thrives on. I feel like she's really calling us, you know, in her ideas to rethink that kind of human at the center and that we're actually very interdependent and very dependent versus that idea of being like at the top of the pyramid. You know, some other ideas that really resonate is about what happens when these different voices and perspectives and paradigms are centered. So I think it, you know, with The UnLeading Project, that's one of the things you're really calling us to do is think about like, what does leadership look like? Or what does, you know, what does this system look like when we center different perspectives and different voices that historically have not been part of the conversation? And I think in climate justice, we get actually a lot of really exciting, you know, pathways forward and possibilities forward. Another idea is about being more holistic and nurturing connections. So thinking about more of our emotions and challenging that mind, heart split, challenging the mind body split. I mean, climate change really brings us into our bodies. When you think about the heat waves and how you cannot help, but really recognize your embodiment in those moments. And, you know, addressing really coming back to addressing these root causes. I feel like that's a core theme, these different paradigms and perspectives and addressing root causes. And I think when we address the root causes, which is what the climate, what like a framing of climate justice really calls us to do, that's where the critical hope lives. That we might be able to transform these structures, but if we're not centering those structures, we're not interrogating them. We're not looking to them as being the cause of what is happening. I think it's hard to generate the kind of hope given the trajectories that we're seeing. And centering this perspective of justice, I think, you know that's something that can create a we without a erasure that I've talked about, you know, that we have different positions in this, but we can come together and center climate justice. And that's where the transformation is really possible.

Vidya Shah (01:24:48):

Thank you so much, Maria, for your contributions today and thank you for all that you've shared and the tremendous work that you're doing in education and beyond to help us shift how we see things to help us to understand these interconnected pieces. To the panelists today, what a conversation this has been. I hope that it opens up much needed dialogue in many educational and community spaces about how we can lead for this work and, and the deep interconnections between multiple forms of justice and liberation and hope that is centered here. I wanna thank all of you for listening to another episode of

season two of The UnLeading podcast. I'm feeling very grateful to be in a space where we are delving into such important, timely, relevant, and liberating ideas. You know, this work of climate justice, what I'm taking away personally from this conversation is just this idea that what we're actually looking to create are worlds in which we are deeply interconnected, spaces in which we care for each other deeply spaces, spaces in which we see ourselves as part of much larger ecosystems. Like that is a really beautiful invitation into this work. That is what this work is about. We hope you'll join us, thank you for listening.