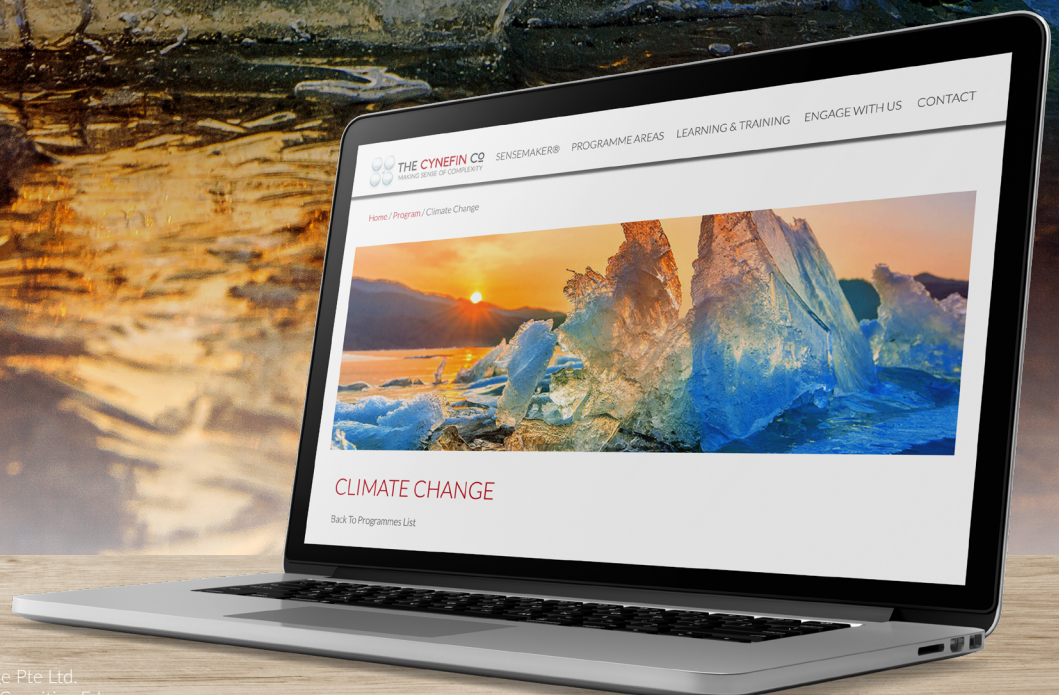




CYNEFIN CENTRE
MAKING SENSE OF COMPLEXITY

CLIMATE CHANGE

A CYNEFIN CENTRE PROGRAMME



Introduction

The Climate Change Program explores the response to climate change from the perspective of the complexity of human systems, including the entanglements with sustainability and biodiversity.

While changes in temperature, sea levels, or weather patterns are measured through computational complexity, the massive chain of their real and potential impacts goes far beyond numbers. Social relations are an inextricable part of this current situation; how humans make sense of and respond to the crisis is a necessary part of any effort to combat it. It is not just about reducing emissions, but about dealing with an entire web of connections that involve people's lives and livelihoods.

By seeing climate change as an intractable problem, we can approach it from a more empowered place. We no longer need to look for a single right answer: instead, we probe for multiple possibilities to shift the system, starting from making sense of the present and our capacity to act in it.

Climate change isn't just an intractable problem, it is also a social, human, and political one, with multiple sides. Exploring and understanding this web of anxiety, doubt, action, economic consequences, negotiation, conviction, and political response is what anthro-complexity is all about. By looking at how the human side is embedded in the struggle, we can approach the complexity of climate change in all the ways it affects us, introducing our own human compassion, appreciation, and moral stance.

This program includes research streams (outlined in this brochure) that organisations or individuals can join, either by using ready-made and well-researched material and instruments, or collaborating on new designs to address additional questions. We also send out occasional open and public pulses using SenseMaker®. These are open to the public, available for anyone to respond to or distribute, and the results can be made accessible at no cost under certain conditions. In addition to having access to the existing research and resources associated with the program, members are also given additional support to develop key areas, and access to a collaborative space to share and exchange with others, including the option of sharing results if desired.

[LEARN MORE](#)



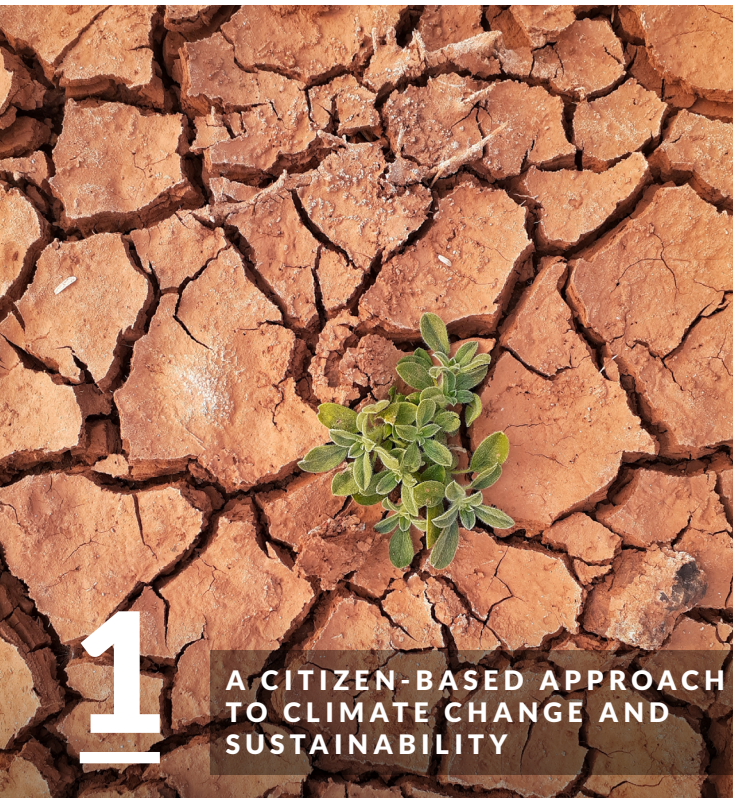
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What is SenseMaker®?

SenseMaker® is key to our practice. The first and original distributed ethnographic approach to sense-making, SenseMaker® allows for large-scale capture of stories into a quantitative framework where the 'subject' becomes their own ethnographer. SenseMaker® combines the scale of numbers with the explanatory power of narrative.

By enabling self-signification – allowing respondents to give meaning to their own experience – SenseMaker® provides an approach that avoids the epistemic injustice of third-party or algorithmic interpretation. Sophisticated visualisations of patterns, ideas, outliers, tendencies, threats, or opportunities are intuitively readable to anyone without the need for a background in statistics. No barriers. No pre-requisite expertise required. Just curiosity.

SenseMaker® allows the powerful combination of vast amounts of data, with the rich context of narrative, based on the anecdotes of real people going about their real lives. Very importantly, SenseMaker® places the voices and interpretations of people at the centre, instead of privileging those in power.



Research Streams

Working with the [Citizens Engagement and Democratic Innovation Programme](#) this research stream will connect environmental concerns with their social context. This way, we can go beyond individual attempts towards sustainability, and harness individual action to common purpose. We can use this aspect of the programme to investigate possibilities for collective action and decision-making, or the scaffolding around which collective action can grow. That information on desires, drivers, motivations, perceptions, and ideas can create a depository of knowledge tied to existing social networks. SenseMaker is ideal for exploring the relationship of the climate emergency with the lived realities and priorities of citizens, talking with them rather than at them. We already know that attitudes and ideologies are central and that certain values are significant predictors for engaging in action to combat climate change, but there is a lot of room in digging down into how that connects with the kinds of lives people want to have and the changes they want to create.



Combating climate change is connected to climate justice: those who have benefited most are least affected by the consequences of climate change. Side-stepping climate justice in the framing of climate change can be deliberately used to trivialise the issue and reduce interest in it, preventing solidarity between groups. Presenting the concern with justice as a highbrow academic occupation encourages the sense of inevitability and paralysis, as well as isolation.

How does our sense of justice connect with the elements that motivate us to take action, and how can the two feed into each other? Which understandings of justice do multiple diverse groups share? What are the elements we all want to leave out of a future, more just world? How can we take responsibility for our impact and privilege without guilt and blame?



We are already losing a lot, and we will lose more. Some of these losses will be traumatic. We need to treat this as a mourning process.

Other losses we might have to choose and embrace, as we change our ways of living. Grief can be part of a positive movement and engagement and eventually lead to rebuilding energy, purpose and direction. Many proposed paths to action, especially those that make assumptions based on “rational individuals” promise solutions that will lead to benefit with no loss at all. The problem is that human decision-making doesn’t actually work by carefully weighing costs and benefits. Instead, we mostly decide based on relationships, experiences, and the stories of our groups and societies. So what are the stories that go beyond personal gain or loss? Would an approach that involves reduced economic growth be acceptable, and how? How much are people prepared to give up, and for what? How can we accept and ease the pain of losing loved practices, as well as live with the cognitive dissonance of still practicing them, without resorting to defence mechanisms like denial?



Values that connect human beings with one another and promote the formation of community are significant for participation in actions supporting and promoting sustainability. Faith groups can be a powerful source of commitment, community, and support, and shape our attitudes to our world. Religious and spiritual beliefs and their communities can support people in making difficult choices – be a force for unity and connection rather than division. Where do our senses of responsibility and duty towards the world we inhabit, but also our sources of repose and restoration, where we connect with our identity, lie? Linking with the networks of the Cynefin Centre’s, [“Numinous” Programme](#), which looks at spirituality and the sense of something bigger than ourselves in the world today, we can work together towards identifying those connections.



DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Thirsty for more knowledge? [Write to us](#) and ask for a copy of our more comprehensive whitepaper covering some of the background of this research.

Would you like to see how SenseMaker® collection works for yourself?
[TRY OUT OUR ONGOING MASSENSE.](#)

ARE YOU THINKING OF GETTING INVOLVED? - CONTACT US



Who Is This For?

This programme is open to governmental, not for profit, academic institutions, and occasional commercial organisations who orient themselves towards the public good. Members do not have to be active specifically...

Why Participate?

Climate change is not only an existential problem of our age; it is also an embodiment of the combination of the unique properties of human complex systems and naturalising sense-making, the two founding...

What Does This Programme Include?

Like all our programmes, members of the climate change programme have access to the following support:

A network of practitioners in their area of expertise and beyond...

More Information

These are the established projects which you can either join or replicate:

A citizen-based approach to climate change and sustainability - This project builds connections to the citizen engagement...