

Contemplative Education Network
Virtual Workshop
June 27th, 2025

“Co-Creating the Path Forward: Next Steps for the Contemplative Education Network”

WELCOME

Contemplative Education Network Provisional Steering Committee

Gábor Karsai - Mind & Life Europe, Switzerland; Dharma Gate Buddhist College, Hungary

Chiara Mascarello - Ca' Foscari University of Venice; Italian Buddhist Union Research Center, Italy

Josipa Mihić - University of Zagreb, PrevLab, Croatia

Harold D. Roth - Brown University, Contemplative Studies program, USA

Support Team

Anne Heyrman-Hart

Derek Sola

MEDITATIVE PRACTICE





WHO IS WITH US TODAY?

CHAT: Who are we - name & organization/affiliation

CONTEMPLATIVE EDUCATION NETWORK NATURE

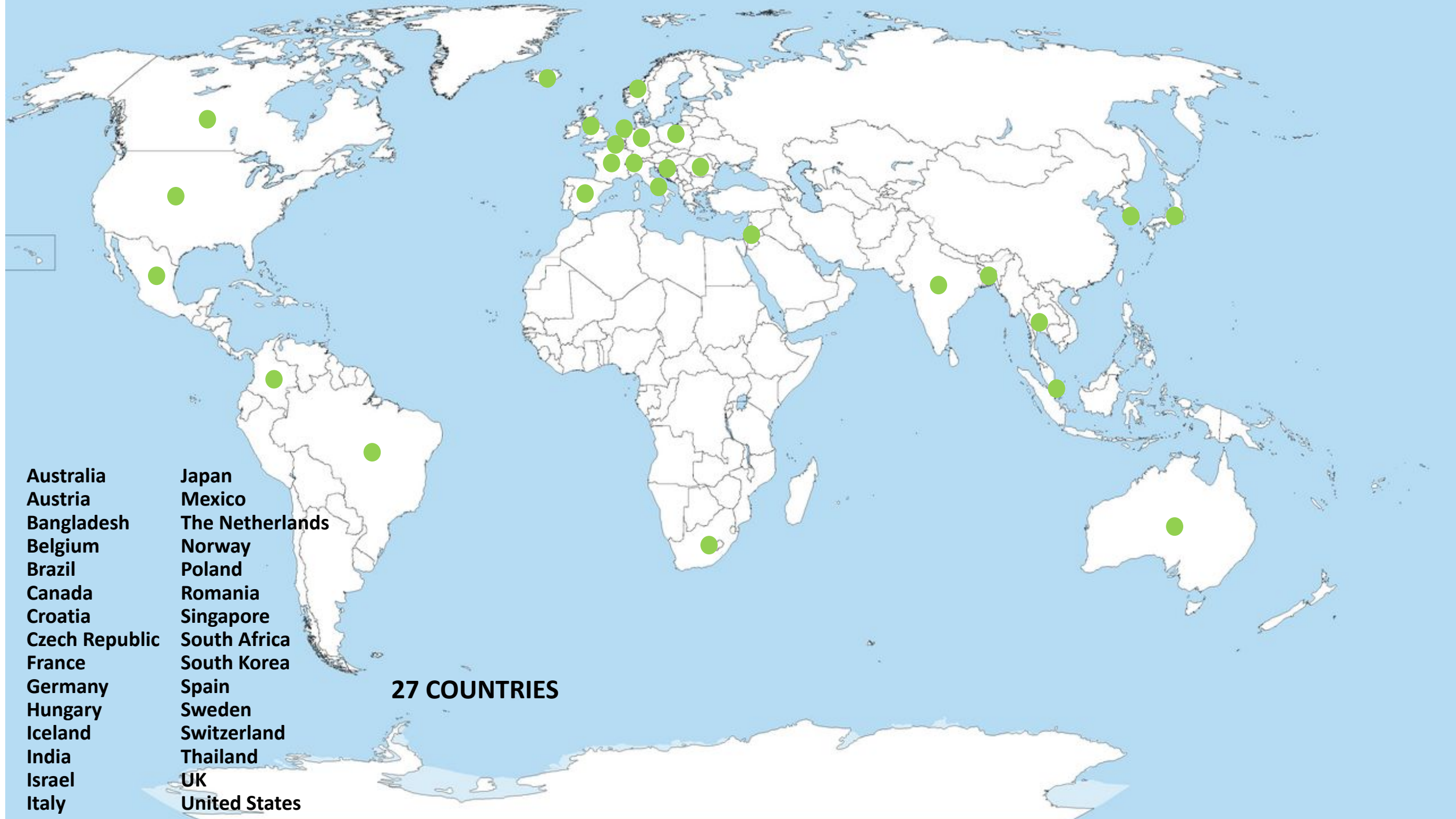
June 19-23, 2024
Padova, Italy



ISCR
2nd ANNUAL
CONFERENCE



WHO IS THE NETWORK?



27 COUNTRIES

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Australia | Japan |
| Austria | Mexico |
| Bangladesh | The Netherlands |
| Belgium | Norway |
| Brazil | Poland |
| Canada | Romania |
| Croatia | Singapore |
| Czech Republic | South Africa |
| France | South Korea |
| Germany | Spain |
| Hungary | Sweden |
| Iceland | Switzerland |
| India | Thailand |
| Israel | UK |
| Italy | United States |

Developmental Science

Cognitive Neurosciences

Education

Education, Psychology, Religious Studies

**Creative Arts Education & Practice - Literature,
Performance**

Psychology

Gerontology and health

Psychology, contemplative research

History

Contemporary art history and theory

Psychology/Social work

Contemplative practice

Religious Studies

Education / Organizational Theory & Culture

**Psychology, contemplative practice, education, social
and emotional learning**

Chinese and comparative philosophy

Education / History

Mindfulness, Organizational Behavior

Religious studies

Contemplative studies

Computational Cognitive Neuroscience

Philosophy

Cognitive science of religion

Composition

Clinical Psychology

Open, Digital & Distance Education

Contemplative science

**Contemplative Studies; Religious Studies, East Asian
Studies**

Contemplative Education

South Asian Religious Studies

School Psychology

Psychology/Religious Studies

Philosophy, education

Philosophy of Education & Contemplative Education

Contemplative education

Prevention science

Communications, public affairs

Comparative Literature; Interdisciplinary Humanities;

Liberal Education

AIMS FOR THE NETWORK

- building a **community**
- promoting **cross-fertilization of sciences and humanities approaches to CE** across all educational levels, from pre-school to post-secondary settings
- creating a consistent meeting space to forge **international exchanges and collaborations**
- advancing **CE scholarship and research**
- **organizing models, standards, and manuals** for programs at various levels related to Contemplative Studies and CE
- fostering scientific documentation on the societal impact of CE, to be presented to **decision-making bodies** for support

TWO VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS/MEETINGS OF CEN HELD SO FAR

JANUARY & APRIL 2025



CONCLUSIONS FROM THE 1st CEN WORKSHOP/MEETING

CEN SURVEY

June - November 2024



Section 1 of 6

CONTEMPLATIVE EDUCATION NETWORK (CEN) SURVEY

B *I* U [A](#) ~~X~~

This brief survey is meant to provide the initiators of CEN with some basic information and ideas to help us plan the network activities. This survey is optional. Please feel free to skip any questions and know your answers will be kept confidential. **The survey will close on November 10th, 2024.**

We very much appreciate your input!

What are your ideas
for what our network
should focus on?



N=100

M age=48,89

Community Building and Networking



Focus on Collaboration: A need for creating networks to share research, methods, and practices.

E.g., "A community of researchers and teachers to share ideas, studies, and experiences."



Supportive Communities: Building a supportive space that balances encouragement and constructive critique.

E.g., "Creating a community that is supportive but allows space for challenge."



Global Engagement: Interest in fostering international collaboration and cultural exchange.

E.g., "Comparing notes, voicing challenges, and obtaining feedback globally."

Practical Implementation



Integration in Curricula: Practical methods for embedding contemplative practices across different levels of education (K-12 to post-secondary education).

E.g., "Identifying most effective contemplative practices to use developmentally."



Developmental Appropriateness: Exploring which practices work for specific age groups and cultural contexts.

E.g., "Developing curricula for each age group."



Overcoming Modern Challenges: Addressing contemporary obstacles like short attention spans and cultural barriers.

E.g., "Practices to assist with fragmented attention spans."

Research and Evidence-Based Approaches



Rigorous Research Needs: There is an emphasis on developing scientific methods to measure the impact of contemplative practices and conduct outcome-based studies.

E.g., "Continued research on effectiveness and processes."



Policy Impact: Evidence-based findings are considered vital for influencing educational policies.

E.g., "Speaking with Educational Ministries (having scientific evidence) to bring contemplative education to the curricula."

Teacher Training and Capacity Building



Focus on Educators: Training teachers to embody contemplative practices and to disseminate them effectively.

E.g., "Providing training and support for those developing contemplative education practices."



Resource Sharing: Developing and sharing tools, materials, and workshops to help teachers and educators.

E.g., "Collaborative development of materials, activities, and practices."

Ethical and Philosophical Considerations



Cultural Sensitivity: Ensuring contemplative practices respect cultural, religious, and secular contexts.

E.g., "Fostering diversity in religious and cultural practices."



Balancing Secular and Spiritual Values: Exploring how to integrate contemplative practices while respecting secular educational environments.

E.g., "Exploring the secular ethical basis for contemplative education."

Broader Aspirations



Transformative Education: Positioning contemplative practices as tools for systemic change, personal growth, and social transformation.

E.g., "Using contemplative practices to support more joy, peace, and equity in our world."



Interdisciplinary Integration: Expanding contemplative education into diverse fields such as law, sociology, and STEM.

E.g., "Showing how contemplative education can be integrated into all disciplines."

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE 2nd CEN WORKSHOP/MEETING

4 PROPOSED PRIORITIES OF CEN

1 / Further Developing the Network

2 / Curriculum Development and Resource Sharing

3 / Mentorship and Support Systems

4 / Advocacy and Awareness

Further Developing the Network: Wednesday, June 25

We will explore how to build an ongoing and sustainable organization of mutual support for its members. How can we make the best use of online resources? How can we design a website that is both engaging and informative for our community? And how can we continue to meet, both virtually and in person, to promote our shared goals?

Curriculum Development and Resource Sharing: June 12

We will provide practical ideas for contemplative teaching at all levels of our educational system. We hope to collect and collate the members' syllabuses, theoretical approaches, contemplative practice methods, and, in short, all the specific details of how each of us puts our ideas of contemplative education into practice. We will also determine the best ways to make these resources accessible to our members.

Mentorship and Support Systems: June 23

We will discuss how we can mutually support one another in our specific work in contemplative education. We will discuss establishing a system of mentorship to guide individual members as they face and meet the challenges of incorporating a contemplative educational perspective and practice into their teaching. We will ask members who have specific skills in K-12 and Post-Secondary education, as well as in contemplative practice, to provide either seminars or one-on-one support for the important work each of us is doing in our respective contexts.

Advocacy and Awareness: June 20

This is the working group that will address the challenges of integrating contemplative education into a system that often overlooks its benefits. How can we best represent our work to the general public? To the decision-makers within our schools and political contexts, who will determine whether to accept and support our work? We will also explore how to promote our vision of the importance of contemplative education to a society that is largely unaware of its potential positive impact on all our lives. This group will also work together to help individuals develop specific plans for establishing realistic goals for contemplative teaching in their contexts and achieving them.

SCHEDULE OF THE WORKSHOP

Co-Creating the Path Forward: Next Steps for the Contemplative Education Network

FIRST SESSION: Description of Contemplative Education

- Summary of the process and an update on proposed description
- Discussion

SECOND SESSION: Reports from the Working Groups Meetings

- WG: Further Developing the Network
Q&A
- WG: Curriculum Development and Resource Sharing
Q&A

MIND/BODY BREAK

SCHEDULE OF THE WORKSHOP

Co-Creating the Path Forward: Next Steps for the Contemplative Education Network

MEDITATION

THIRD SESSION: Reports from the Working Groups Meetings

- WG: Mentorship and Support Systems
Q&A
- WG: Advocacy and Awareness
Q&A

MEETING CLOSE & ANNOUNCEMENTS



DESCRIPTION OF CE

We would like to offer a working description of what we, as a network, currently understand by “Contemplative Education”—a definition that remains open to further reflection and development.

“Contemplative Education” is a new branch in the field of Education that considers the philosophies and applies the practices included in the emerging field of Contemplative Studies and in the various wisdom traditions.

The approach of Contemplative Education, along with its related research, leads to the integration of a range of contemplative, creative, and embodied practices (such as focused meditation, *yoga*, *taiji*, etc.) in different educational settings. These practices, both conceptual and non-conceptual, aim to enhance individual awareness and support collective learning.

Contemplative Education can also be regarded as a field of application within the broader domain of Contemplative Studies, exploring how contemplative practices and their associated ways of knowing can be studied, examined, and transmitted within interdisciplinary spaces of knowledge exchange and cultivation, such as schools, universities, and research institutions.

Contemplative Education aims to foster transformative personal and interpersonal growth by cultivating attentional focus, sustained inquiry and reflection, and a broader perspective on the various contexts in which one is embedded, including family, schools, one’s work environment, communities, society, and nature.

Studies suggest that these approaches encourage an increased curiosity for learning and foster other-regarding virtues, including humaneness, compassion, and kindness.



REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS MEETINGS

WG: Further Developing the Network

Key Takeaways

1. Clarifying the CEN Identity and Structure

Members desire decentralization (as a collaborative, bottom-up network) with coordination

2. Strategic Collaborations and Synergies for the CEN

Starting from what we know, establish potential synergies with similar initiatives

3. Communication Tools and Infrastructure for the CEN

A strong need for:

- A **newsletter** for the various WGs
- A simple tool for **sharing** resources/networks/events/complementary organizations (via Google Form)
- A (selected, simple) **directory** of members, networks, events, foundations/philanthropists
- An interactive **forum** (Discord, Lemmy, etc.)

4. In-Person Meetings for the CEN members

Balancing **personal** connection and **professional** content.

Enthusiasm for CEN in-person gatherings (**at other events or as stand-alone events**):

- ISCR and AAR conferences
- Possible contemplative summer retreats (e.g., Khyentse Foundation land in Oregon, Omega Institute, UVA's Contemplative Commons)
- Future event in Leipzig (Achtsamkeit in Bildung und Hoch-/Schule - Mindfulness in Education and School/College, 2026)
- ...

Next Steps

A. Create a Database - for the whole CEN?

Goal: Build a centralized but collaborative resource for tracking:

- member affiliations, interests, locations
- similar organizations/networks
- resources
- events
- complementary organizations (foundations, etc.)

Tasks:

- Design a shared Google Form > 1 person?
- Vet and select the suggestions > 1 team?
- Design a way to share them online > 1 person + IT?



B. Create the CEN Digital Infrastructure

Goal: Evaluate platforms (Discord, Lemmy, Reddit clone) and propose one for community engagement.

Tasks: for a specific group + IT?

- Conduct platform trials
- Consider data privacy, access levels, and sustainability
- Recommend 1-2 tools to the broader network
- Look for IT and supervise the implementation



B. Plan CEN In-Person and Online Gatherings

Goal: Integrate CEN presence into key conferences and retreats.

Tasks: for the whole WG?

- Draft proposal for CEN session at ISCR (or shall we keep it informal?) and/or AAR
- Reach out to venue hosts (Omega, Khyentse Foundation, UVA)
- Develop concept for a summer 2026 retreat



D. CEN Governance and Sustainability

Goal: Maintain CEN momentum with a light but effective coordination model.

Tasks: for 2 people?

- Explore network governance models (e.g., rotating facilitators, dues, mentorship structures) and recommend 1-2 models to the broader network
- Perhaps propose a decision-making workflow



Next WG Meeting: Planning

- Suggested recurring rhythm: monthly (August break respected)
- Use When2Meet to determine date
- Proposed help: Zack Clark to continue coordinating WG logistics
- Creating a WG Google drive shared folder
- Sending out notes + recordings to the WG members
- Sending out inputs/tasks in preparation for the next meeting



REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS MEETINGS
WG: Curriculum Development and Resource Sharing



Key Takeaways

Key Questions

- What kinds of resources do we need and/or can already share?
- How to collect/share?
- What practices are effective + why?
- What activities/outputs are realistic in the coming months?
- Who's willing to take more active roles?
- Funding

Key Takeaways

Creating a platform for resource sharing

- Mapping already available resources and collaborating with other networks, to avoid duplicating efforts and ensure alignment in their work
- No comprehensive database exists
- Ensuring cultural sensitivity and evidence-based approach
- Developing criteria for collecting and organizing CE resources and programs
- Start collecting via Google Sheet, use columns: name, email, age group, setting (K-12/university), assessment info, link, using a tag-based system in the future for more flexible searching
- Could eventually embed on website: <https://contemplative-education.com/>
- Challenges of creating and maintaining a database, emphasizing the need for dedicated funding and resources
- Adding a discussion forum



Key Takeaways

Importance of evidence based approach

- Challenges in assessing contemplative education program outcomes and implementation quality
- Conducted studies lack standardisation
- Is there a need to form a separate research focused working group to focus on developing appropriate assessment tools and research projects?



Key Takeaways

Enhancing Collaboration Strategies & Effectiveness

- The importance of regular meetings to foster connection and collaboration
- The need for a more efficient communication tool for the group, considering the challenges of using multiple messaging apps
- Organize into **smaller teams** (e.g., *Research*, *Resources*, etc.) to better structure the group's efforts.
- The group also addressed challenges related to time zones and agreed to explore options for supporting regional meetings
- Another meeting on **July 11th**

Next steps

Research into existing repositories (websites, library guides, databases, etc.)

- Collections of curriculum/programs
- Collections of interventions for certain groups
- Collections of degree-programs
- Professional networks similar to CEN

A team of volunteer organizers for building the CEN database

- Two Teams: One to build/maintain infrastructure and one to curate content.
- Resource Categories (rough draft):
 - Research, Assessment Tools, Curriculum (Degree programs and Interventions and training programs), Exercises/Practices (i.e. - wheel of awareness), Active projects by members, Funding opportunities, CEN Member contact information, Other
- Could lead to a CEN meta-analysis?

Next steps

A regular newsletter with updates to the database and announcements about meetings, conferences, funding opportunities, etc.

- Who will run it?
- How will they interact/interface with the database teams above? Should one member of those teams run the newsletter?
- Is it worth the effort right now? Or should we wait?

Should we **collect resources** only from members of the network or an open call to anybody to submit via the website?

- We are leaning towards starting with member-submitted resources
- Have a section for “in-network resources” (created by members) and a section of “all resources” that can come from outside the network as well?

Do we need **another platform to communicate within the network**? (Like Discord, or a forum on CEN, etc.)

- Leaning towards a forum on CEN website that allows for discussion and storage/access of database.

MIND AND BODY BREAK
15 MIN

MEDITATIVE PRACTICE





REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS MEETINGS

WG: Mentorship and Support Systems

CEN Working Group Meeting: Mentorship and Support - June 23

The first part of the meeting was spent on introductions.

Of the dozen or so people present, we had a wide geographical representation that included Delhi, India, Padova, Italy, Tel Aviv, Israel, Dublin, Ireland, Singapore/London, and several places in the US: Vermont, Buffalo, NY, Bloomington Indiana, Charlottesville Virginia, Providence, RI, and "Dudley" Massachusetts.



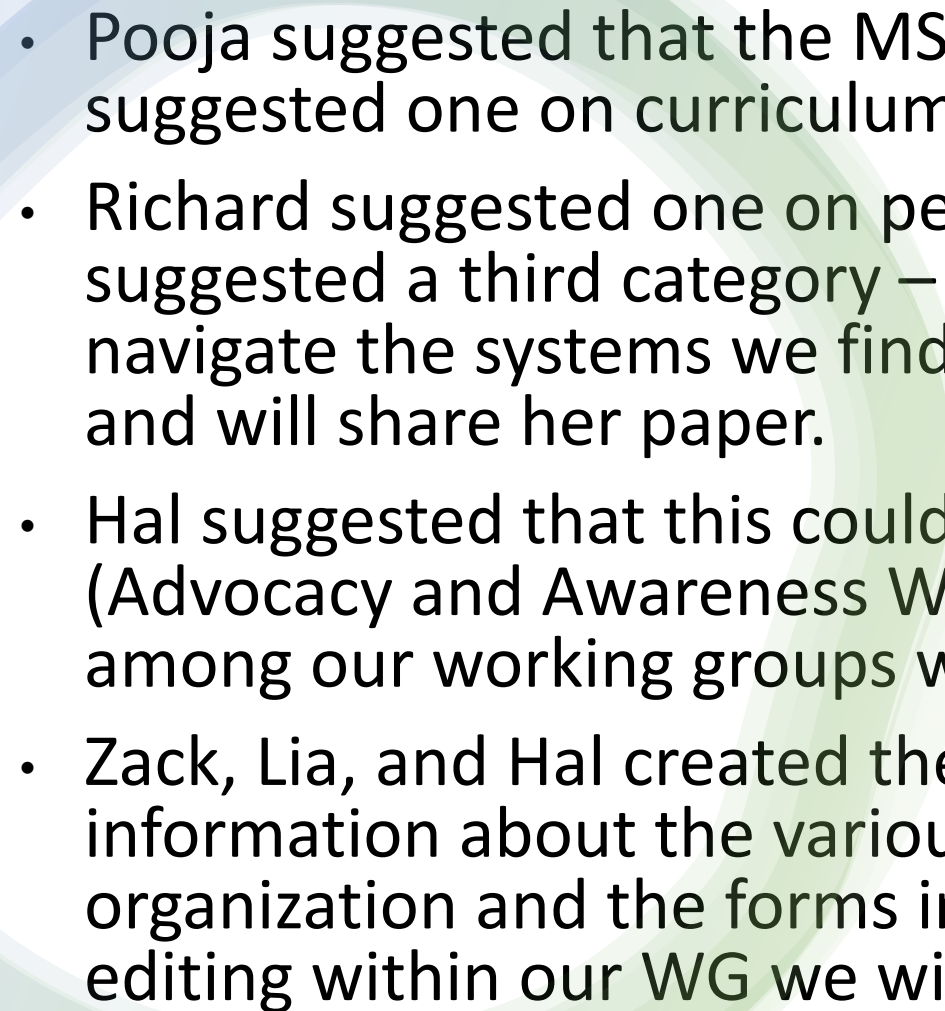
Participants also mentioned a few of the activities in which they had been engaged involving Contemplative Education. These included:

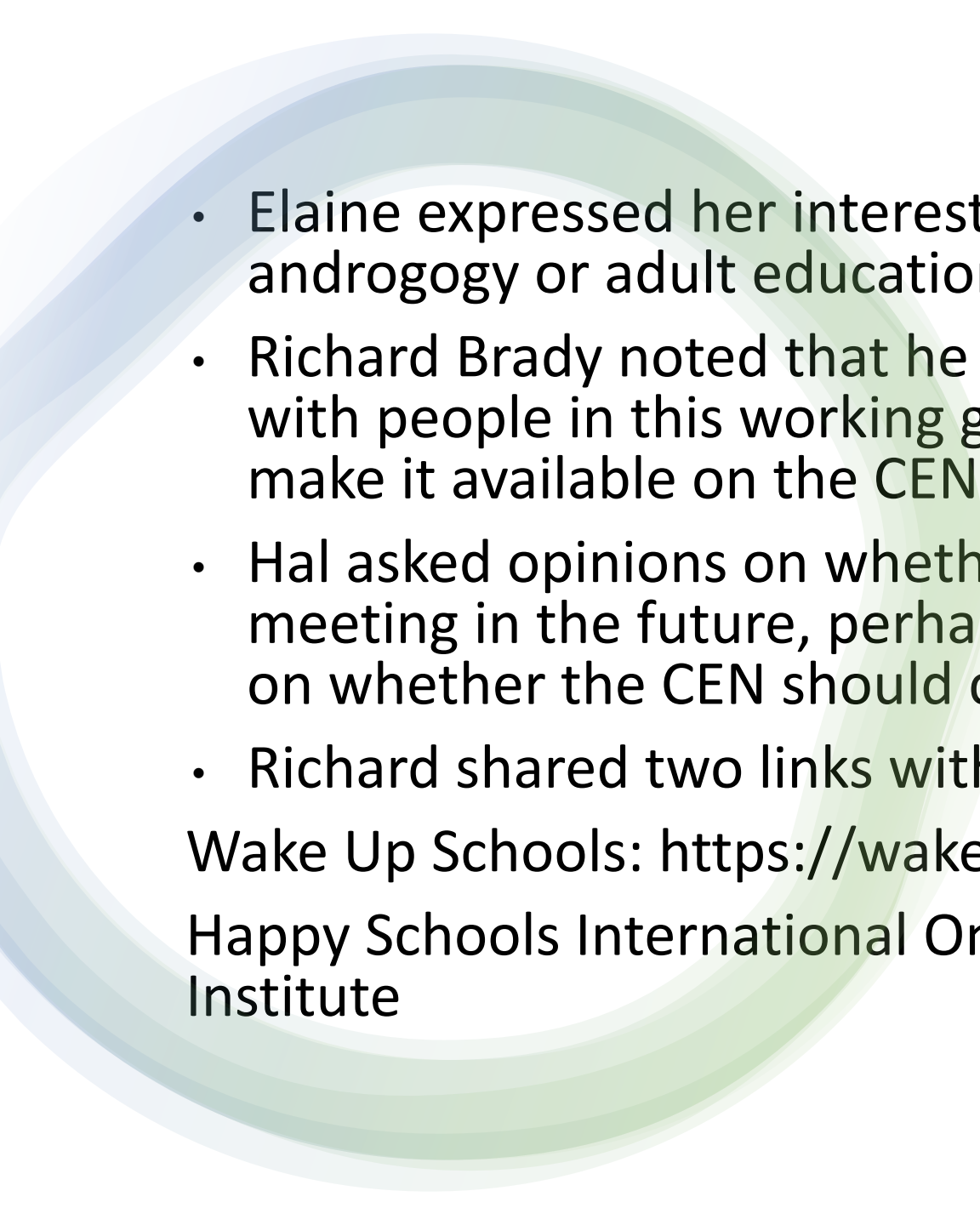
- Mindfulness Retreat for Educators
- Mindful Mathematics teaching curriculum
- "Happy Teachers Sangha" associated with Plum Village and the sangha of Thich Nhat Hanh
- "Wake Up Schools" Newsletter
- Mindful Leadership Program for NY State's 64 counties
- Mindful Alliance Therapy
- Meditation for Loneliness in Young Men
- Mindful Musicianship
- Mindful Practices for Scientists
- Contemplative Education and Public Humanities
- Non-Reductionistic Approaches to Mindfulness in Education
- Contemplative Approaches to Employee Well-Being and Mental Health
- University-level Program Development in Contemplative Studies Education



Following these introductions, in which the individual and collective expertise of our working group became evident:

- Hal suggested that one thing our MSWG could work on with appropriate staff assistance was a database listing these expertises of our working group, and of the entire organization membership and the willingness to mentor others.
- Pooja stated that she was interested in finding out how contemplative studies programs were integrated into higher education.
- Hal suggested several alternatives, including organizing online and, if possible, in-person small workshops on this.

- 
- Pooja suggested that the MSWG break down into focus groups. She suggested one on curriculum design.
 - Richard suggested one on pedagogy. Later in the meeting, Lisa suggested a third category – bridging and framing, or how to navigate the systems we find ourselves in. She has written about this and will share her paper.
 - Hal suggested that this could overlap with work in the AAWG (Advocacy and Awareness Working Group), but some overlap among our working groups was inevitable.
 - Zack, Lia, and Hal created the draft of a Google Form to solicit information about the various mentoring expertises in our full organization and the forms in which we can share them. After editing within our WG we will send to the entire membership list.

- 
- Elaine expressed her interest in investigating mentoring in androgogy or adult education.
 - Richard Brady noted that he would like to have a panel discussion with people in this working group, make a video recording of it, and make it available on the CEN website.
 - Hal asked opinions on whether or not to hold a brick-and-mortar meeting in the future, perhaps early in 2026. He also asked opinions on whether the CEN should collect dues.
 - Richard shared two links with the group:

Wake Up Schools: <https://wakeupschools.org>

Happy Schools International Online Course from Eurasia Learning Institute



CEN Mentoring and Support Group Survey/Sign-Up Development:

This google doc will eventually be turned into a Google Form for data collection.

Goal of the survey: To collect data on who is interested in participating in the mentorship/support programs as a mentor or mentee. This survey should be able to function both as an initial interest form for creating the program and as a sign-up form in the future.



Possible Sign-Up Form Items:

Name/email

Institutional details (to connect people in similar institutions)

Educational level they teach in:

Elementary

Middle School

High School

Undergraduate

Graduate

Areas of expertise/experience

Fill in the blank (open-ended response)

Which of these Mentorship areas sound most aligned with your interests? (check all that apply)

Curriculum Development (syllabi, content, assignments, etc.)

Pedagogy: Theories of Contemplative Education



Broader questions to consider for the group (not for the survey):

- Should this endeavor have a dedicated volunteer/s - coordinator/s?
- Should this be an open database, or controlled by a coordinator who organizes the meetings to maintain boundaries?
- This would allow people to apply for both individual conversations and regular group meetings.
- This would make it easier for the mentors to decline in a less awkward way.
- This would protect the time of mentors by keeping track of how much they have been contributing relative to others.



REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS MEETINGS

WG: Advocacy and Awareness

June 20th, 15:00-16:30 CEST



Purpose of June 20th meeting

- Explore how to effectively present contemplative education to wider audiences—school leaders, policymakers, funders, and the public.



Who We Are

- Appr. 15 people
- An international group of educators, researchers, activists, and practitioners
- Diverse expertise: neuroscience, psychology, medicine, education, Buddhism, public policy
- Institutions represented: University of Florida, Penn State, Essex, Albany, Padova, University of Virginia, University of British Columbia, and more



Core Values in Advocacy

- Contemplative Integrity
- Safety, choice, non-coercion
- Co-design & cultural sensitivity
- Humor, compassion, and humility
- Visibility + Researchability



Key Objectives

- Develop contemplative approaches to advocacy
- Address misconceptions (e.g. secular vs. spiritual tensions)
- Promote CE through stories, research, and strategy
- Balance visibility with safety and ethical integrity
- Create tangible tools for educators and advocates



Why This Matters

CE addresses urgent social needs:

- Student & teacher mental health
- Resilience & emotional intelligence
- Inclusive, compassionate education

But:

- Often misunderstood or undervalued
- Lacks clear pathways for policy or integration



Target Audiences

- School & University Leaders
 - Policymakers & Funders
 - Mental Health & Public Health Officials
 - Parents, Teachers, and the Public
-
- Approach = Top-down AND bottom-up strategies



Insights from Discussion

- “Data doesn’t move the needle—experience and leadership do.”
- “Contemplative education should question mainstream norms without being threatening.”
- “We must meet people where they are—with clarity, humility, and humor.”



Strategic Priorities Identified

- Ambassador & Outreach Program
 - Train advocates to engage diverse audiences
- Toolkit & Resource Hub
 - Best practices, stories, narratives, policy templates
- Safety & Ethics Framework
 - Addressing emotional, cultural, and systemic risks
- Contemplative Manifesto / Position Paper
 - Clear, research-backed articulation of CE's relevance



How We Will Work

- Monthly meetings for 4 months (Jul–Oct 2025)
- Shared development of:
 - Toolkit repository (case studies, strategies)
 - Contemplative Manifesto / Brief
 - Geographically attuned subgroups (EU, US, etc.)



Next Steps

- Add members to the Working Group email list
- Collect case studies and challenges
- Draft outline for a CE Manifesto
- Launch online resource hub with crowd-sourced materials
- Prepare for next monthly meeting



Please sign up for any of the WGs you'd like to contribute to!

Write to us (contemplative.ed.network@gmail.com)
to be added to any WG contact list



CEN WEBPAGE

<https://contemplative-education.com/>

Save the Date:

September 19, 2025

NEXT VIRTUAL CEN WORKSHOP

3.00-5.30 pm CEST / 9.00-11.30 am EST