

A person is seen from behind, sitting in a meditative posture on a wooden pier that extends into a calm lake. The lake's surface is still, reflecting the surrounding landscape. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains with patches of green forest. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is peaceful and contemplative.

**Conscious Food Systems
Alliance (CoFSA):
Reflection on COP26**

Conscious Food Systems Alliance: Reflection on COP26

Introduction

Following the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), we're proud to showcase the pioneering work of the Conscious Food Systems Alliance (CoFSA) Partners offering support to policy makers at COP26. This includes workshops, guided meditations, Q&As, and a TED talk offered by [Plum Village Monastics](#); a panel discussion on the role of sustainable and compassionate leadership for climate neutrality, with partners [Jeroen Janss](#) of the [Inner Green Deal Initiative](#) and [Christine Wamsler](#), [Professor at Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies](#); the '[Co-Creative Reflection & Dialogue Space](#)' hosted by the [Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies \(IASS\)](#), with CoFSA partner [Dr. Thomas Bruhn](#); and an open-sharing and deep-listening circle on 'Climate emotions, feelings and breakthroughs', led by [Laureline Simon Krichewsky](#) of [One Resilient Earth](#), in collaboration with [Sarah Queblatin](#), co-founder and executive director of the [Green Releaf Initiative](#).

Plum Village Monastics at UN Climate Change Conference (COP26)

Over the last month, International [Plum Village](#) monastics have joined the TED Countdown Summit in Edinburgh and the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow to offer workshops, guided meditations, Q&As, and a TED talk. They have taught about the importance of integrating compassion, mindfulness, joy, and community into the art of saving the planet.

This builds on a strong legacy of Plum Village founder and Zen Master, Thich Nhat Hanh, who helped convene Europe's [first conference on the environment](#) in France with Sister Chan Khong in 1970, and subsequent support to the U.N. Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. When invited, the monks and nuns offer a spiritual

perspective and practices which, along with their solid peaceful presence, can be a real support for all the politicians, scientists, activists, thought leaders, and business leaders at these key global conferences.

*“Caring for the changemakers is an essential part of what we can offer. When people are full of stress, it’s very hard to be open and to listen. We see that everybody is at their limit of what they can tolerate, they are under so much strain at both the logistical level and especially at the emotional level. We know that for anybody working in this space, there’s pain, frustration, despair, and so we see it as absolutely essential to talk about that and about how we can handle that. It’s not about covering it up, or denying it, or making it go away, but it’s how to handle that pain and sorrow. **The good news is that we have spiritual technology.** We’ve had it for a very long time and we know it works.” - Brother Spirit (Phap Linh)*



Watch Brother Phap Dung and Brother Spirit (Phap Linh) offer a powerful Q&A at the TED Countdown event in Edinburgh ahead of the COP26 Climate Conference in Glasgow [here](#). (Their segment starts at 1:09:00).

Inner Green Deal moderates panel-discussion to explore the role of sustainable and compassionate leadership at official side event hosted by EU

In an EU-hosted official side event, [Jeroen Janss](#) of the [Inner Green Deal Initiative](#) moderated a session on **"What leadership qualities are needed now?"** exploring the role of sustainable and compassionate leadership in achieving climate neutrality.

The online panel discussion included inspiring contributions from

- CoFSA partner [Christine Wamsler](#), [Professor at Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies](#),
- [Clara de la Torre](#), Deputy Director-General at DG CLIMA of the European Commission;
- [Eva Karlsson](#) CEO of Houdini Sportswear and a leader in the circular economy.

All three speakers acknowledged the importance and the transformational value of cultivating inner qualities such as awareness, compassion and courage and were clear that leaders need to lead by example and be explicit about the role of such qualities in the journey ahead.

Quote by [Christine Wamsler](#), [Professor at Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies](#):

"If I had to share one key finding, it would be the importance of compassion in overcoming the narrative of separation, and supporting other transformative qualities that together lead to increased climate action. Presence and compassion truly seem to be essential qualities for our time".

Quote by [Clara de la Torre](#), Deputy Director-General at DG CLIMA of the European Commission:

“Compassion, – mentioned by Professor Wamsler – is indeed something that we need to cultivate more. Compassion is a universal and very human quality. If we want to connect to all citizens of Europe and in fact all citizens on this planet, then we need to listen and cultivate empathy and compassion so that our solutions reflect the needs of all and not just those who shout the hardest or who happen to have access to power. We need to ensure we leave no one behind. Openness and willingness to consider others’ needs, ideas and viewpoints is also essential for the kinds of collaborative and participatory approaches we need to tackle the multi-dimensional challenges we are facing”



Access the session recording:

- [Podcast with audio recording](#) (accessible on all devices)
- [Video recording](#)

Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) hosts Co-Creative Reflection & Dialogue Space at COP26

The IASS [‘Co-Creative Reflection & Dialogue Space’](#) offers a space where negotiators and stakeholders of observer organisations can meet in formats that are typically not used in side events, but are more structured than informal dialogues in breaks or over meals. The space is designed to deepen meaningful interaction, build trust and engage openly in honest dialogue and reflection.

The IASS piloted such spaces during COP24 in Katowice and offered them for a second time at COP25 in Madrid. The researchers tested different facilitation formats to see what works in the setting of a UN Climate Change conference. The delegates who participated represented a diverse composition in terms of their professional background, cultural socialization, age, gender and role in the negotiations. Several of them strongly expressed the need for protected spaces for discussions in smaller groups, facilitated interactions, and reflections to think out loud and think together and to be supported in reconnecting to a deeper level of intention whilst participating and engaging in the COP.

The events center on and practice a particular format of reflection and dialogue to allow co-generation of topics for the exchange in a bottom-up manner from each participant.

“As challenging as the environment of the COP is due to its high noise and stress level, it was encouraging to witness how many people made use of the opportunity to engage in deeper personal reflection and dialogue. My observations and the feedback from many participants affirm my hope that through these encounters we strengthen the capacities for people and organizations to build trustworthy relationships and take more effective climate action together.” – Thomas Bruhn, IASS Potsdam

More information and the full list of sessions is available [here](#).

One Resilient Earth & Green Releaf Initiative collaborate on deep listening event 'Climate emotions, feelings and breakthroughs,' as part of IASS Space

[Laureline Simon Krichewsky](#) of [One Resilient Earth](#) led an open-sharing and deep-listening circle on climate emotions, feelings and breakthroughs, in collaboration with [Joyce Najm Mendez](#) and [Sarah Queblatin](#), co-founder and executive director of the [Green Releaf Initiative](#), as part of the 'Co-Creative Reflection & Dialogue Space' led by the [Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies \(IASS\)](#). The event, held on-site in the 'Blue Zone' and accessible online, offered the opportunity for COP participants and other climate advocates, professionals, youth activists, and change makers, to come together and share the full spectrum of emotions they are experiencing at the start of the international climate negotiation process. Following an open-sharing and deep-listening session, the event provided an open space to explore the role of emotions in the international climate change negotiation process.

"It was truly inspiring supporting and being part of the circle of COP26 delegates expressing their personal process - a space for the heart, filling the gap between the mind and action dominant climate "talks" in the entire two weeks. It was so touching to hear questions, reflections, affirmations, doubts, hopes, and fears shared among strangers who found their stories woven and witnessed together" - Sarah Queblatin, the Green Releaf Initiative

Concluding Remarks

We are glad to see more conscious approaches increasingly represented in such global events, and our partners in CoFSA starting to collaborate on such occasions. We look forward to bringing their works to global events on food and agriculture.