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2023 Annual Report

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This report was compiled in February 2024 by CT Collaborative director Sarah Stroup, in consultation with staff from the Grants and Sponsored Programs office.

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INTRODUCTION

We are almost two years into the work of Conflict Transformation (CT) at Middlebury. The CT Collaborative has supported new courses, programs, and experiences for students throughout the global Middlebury institution. In this second end-of-year annual report, we describe our efforts from July-December 2023. For program descriptions for the first half of the year, please see our midyear report.

In March 2022, the CT Collaborative began by launching a wide array of new programs and projects focused on a discrete list of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that facilitate constructive conflict. In our second year, we have sought to enhance this programmatic work with two additional efforts, both essential to the ambitious objective of developing and disseminating a flexible approach to conflict transformation.

First, we have identified a set of core learning goals for all participants in all CT programs. Those three objectives, developed at our August retreat of the CT Pillar Heads, are as follows:

1. Advance a new understanding of conflict (as inevitable and necessary for positive social change)
2. Willingness to understand self and others (perspective-taking)
3. Commitment to action (not just see conflict differently, but do conflict differently)

These objectives were developed through collective reflection on the feedback from student participants in our first year of programs. They can be pursued in a variety of ways across diverse student bodies. These goals are consistent with leading global scholarship and practice and responsive to the needs and capacities of a global liberal arts institution.

Second, we have expanded our communications about the many new CT-supported programs and experiences. With an updated website, Instagram feed, and podcast, and through tailored presentations to internal and external constituents, we are creating a knowledge base that will contribute to global networks and inform other institutions' approaches to education in constructive conflict.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR CT IN K-12 SCHOOLS

As outlined in our July report, the “Teaching, Writing, and Acting for Change” courses this summer at the Bread Loaf School of English (BLSE) served 28 K-12 teachers. We awarded 12 Change Fellowships to support BLSE summer study for teachers committed to engaging in CT explorations.

This summer, students who had taken the “Change” courses in 2022 and received Action Grants presented their projects to the full BLSE community. At the end of the summer session, students enrolled in the 2023 Change courses presented their work to the full BLSE community.

We opened this summer’s Change workshops to our full BLSE community with a series of CT-oriented events and workshops. Three were arranged in parallel with CT summer programming at the College:

- “Tea and Talk” by Hillary Mullins, on interpersonal conflict and non-defensive communication
- “The Voices of St. Joseph’s Orphanage,” a multimedia exhibit by St. Joseph’s Orphanage Restorative Inquiry and The Vermont Folklife Center; exhibited on the BLSE campus and featured in a special meeting of the Change cohort
- Presentation on the complexities of war and peace by Projects for Peace Alumni Award winner Joseph Kaifala, moderated by CT Collaborative director Sarah Stroup

In addition, our CT grant supported:

- A Bread Loaf Teacher Network (BLTN)/Beyond the Page (BtP) workshop that drew on a Change course in Creative Practice and featured student work funded by a Change Action Grant
- Workshop on a BLTN Oral History project (“These Halls Can Talk”), run by Shaleisha Brewer, head mentor of the Atlanta BLTN Next Generation Leadership Network (BLTN NextGen) team, and focused on Booker T. Washington High School graduates and their experiences of the civil rights movement

As part of this series, we also offered a screening and discussion of James Sanchez’s film, *Man on Fire* (no grant funding was used for this event).

During the second half of 2023, BLTN and BLTN NextGen expanded their Conflict Transformation work, catalyzing learning across difference throughout the network through Change Action Grants, increased cross-site activity, and further development of the three affiliate BLTN NextGen sites established in February 2023 (Chelsea, MA; Philadelphia, PA; and Henrico, VA).

We are pleased to report that the Aiken, SC BLTN NextGen team began developing their first summer writing institutes for youth. The Aiken team has been consulting with BLTN leaders in Lawrence, MA, to replicate in Aiken the well-established and culturally transformative summer writing institutes that have evolved in Lawrence through a 30-plus year BLTN partnership between Andover Academy and BLSE (Andover Bread Loaf / ABL). The ABL institutes engage K-12 students in the skill and joy of writing and train them to become writing leaders for the institute and their community, helping generations of Latinx students thrive. CT grant funding has allowed Aiken BLTN NextGen members to travel to Lawrence for this important work.

The “What’s the Story?” (WTS) initiative also expanded over the reporting period. WTS, which has been a signature program of Vermont BLTN and Vermont BLTN NextGen, has now become a training and seeding ground for multiple BLTN and BLTN NextGen groups. WTS activities included:

- WTS Vermont leaders hosted open workshops in Vermont on socially based documentary filmmaking for BLTN NextGen youth and mentors from South Carolina, Atlanta, Louisville, the Santa Fe Indian School, and Chelsea. They also traveled to Santa Fe to work with BLTN Next Gen youth and mentors there.
- WTS added to its reach a new BLTN cohort in Washington DC, and is working for six weeks this year with a BLTN cohort in Lexington, KY.
- Teachers, youth, and mentors across BLTN and BLTN NextGen not only trained each other in the use documentary films for social activism; they also worked across their own differences as they collaborated with peers from radically different areas of the country.
- To help cultivate, broaden, and publicize these collaborations, this summer (July 12-14, 2024), BLSE will host a BLTN NextGen retreat and WTS filmfest on its Vermont campus, bringing this work to the full BLSE/Middlebury community.

Finally, with support from CT grant funds, BLSE is running a Winter Institute February 16-18, 2024, on “Teaching, Writing, and Acting Across Difference.” The program will provide 12 professional development credit hours for teachers. The Institute will involve up to 50 participants. As of December 2023, 45 teachers are already enrolled, primarily from NY, MA, and VT. To encourage participation, BLSE had applied for and received approval from New York State to serve as a recognized professional educational provider.

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN UNDERGRADUATE LIFE

To build the capacity to deliver CT programming to students, we have developed new courses, expanded professional development for faculty and staff, and created new opportunities for restorative practices and skill building in residential and student life.

To inform curricular offerings, we have researched comparable programs at other institutions, and convened advisory groups of faculty and staff. These efforts are interdisciplinary and designed to engage with experiential opportunities in Pillars 3 (experiential learning) and 5 (global literacy).

A new “Conflict Transformation Skills” course enrolled 100 students in 2023. The first pilot was a full-credit Winter Term course (62 students) co-taught by Sarah Stroup (CT director and political science faculty), Steve Viner (philosophy), and Julian Portilla (international mediator). President Laurie Patton (religion faculty) and Sarah Stroup taught a half-credit version of the course in spring 2023 (20 students), and Sarah Stroup taught a fall 2023 half-credit version (20 students).

This past fall, we convened an interdisciplinary group of faculty interested in conflict analysis, drawing from political science, sociology, writing and rhetoric, psychology, education studies, and religion. Across three sessions, we identified key concepts from each discipline, developed a framework for a conflict analysis course that would tackle three levels of conflict (interpersonal, institutional, and structural), and explored curricular models at other institutions. These conversations informed three new courses being offered in 2024: “Theories and Fundamentals of Conflict Transformation,” taught by Chong-suk Han, “Restorative Justice Theory and Practice,” taught by visiting instructor sujatha baliga, and “Mindfulness and CT Skills,” taught by Melissa Hammerle.

We are also diffusing our approach into existing courses and trainings. CT skill-building is being integrated into INTD 121 (an interdepartmental course that supports students working in community partnerships), the Poverty and Privilege cluster, the History in Translation Program, and the Experiential Learning Hub (an online platform supporting a wide variety of co-curricular student experiences).

Finally, curricular engagement with CT training continued through our collaboration with Beyond the Page. In the fall, eight faculty collaborated with BtP Faculty Artists in their classrooms, reaching 300 students in 16 class visits across nine academic departments. BtP faculty used multiple modes of storytelling, embodiment, and creative practices to engage students across various disciplines. Topics addressed included: systemic racism; populism and democracy; naming and culturally responsive pedagogies; cultivating curiosity and humility in understanding the people behind data; how to arrive together across difference at Middlebury; how stories make science more accessible and inclusive. BtP also worked directly with student groups, including Digital Learning & Inquiry (DLINQ) interns and Climate Action Student Fellows. A total of 40 students and three faculty/staff joined this collaboration.

Our professional development programming is expanding through a focus on three core capacities: structured dialogue, restorative practices, and creative practices. We have also offered shorter forms of engagement.

Structured Dialogue: In the fall we offered professional development programs for faculty and staff through the *Engaged Listening Project* (ELP) program, with four faculty facilitators from different disciplines leading two cohorts, 16 participants total. The cohorts began with a two-day dialogic classroom workshop with [Essential Partners](#) (the long-standing partner of the ELP) and met for six subsequent workshops throughout the semester. Connecting to other CT approaches, the cohorts attended a workshop on Restorative Practices led by Brian Lind, focused on identifying harm and understanding how to respond appropriately. For spring 2024, we received 31 applications from faculty and staff. We

will have two cohorts led by ELP faculty facilitators Michole Biancosino, Chong-Suk Han, William Nash, and Lida Winfield, with support from Pillar 2 head Sebnem Gumuscu.

Restorative Practices: Brian Lind and his team led a two-day training course for Residential Life staff on facilitating community-building circles and responding to low-level community harms, and we trained orientation leaders on community building among new students. Building on efforts last spring, Restorative Practices leaders, in collaboration with Residential Life staff and the First-Year Dean, held monthly circles focused on developmental messaging, community building, and reflection. Seven faculty and staff completed trainings at the Center for Restorative Justice at the University of San Diego that focused on identifying needs and harms, facilitating restorative practices, and bringing restorative justice to cases of sexual misconduct. Finally, bi-weekly restorative practice circles continue, expanding our circle of practitioners and providing a space for people to learn, grow, and be in community together. Participation ebbs and flows, but we have consistently had 10-12 colleagues each time.

Creative Practices: In November, BtP Faculty Artists developed and implemented a day-long professional development pilot workshop in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (OIDEI). Twenty faculty attended the workshop and explored how to use embodied practice as a tool for building community, transforming relationships in the classroom, and addressing harm.

Other Professional Development: We have offered shorter professional development sessions as well. We held a plenary session on Conflict Transformation during the annual Teaching and Writing Retreat (August 28-29) hosted by Middlebury's Center for Teaching, Learning, and Research (CTLR). Lida Winfield (Dance, ELP) and Sarah Stroup (CT director) introduced the main pedagogical principles of Conflict Transformation, then participants attended sessions on reflective writing (led by Genie Giaimo); tackling controversial topics (led by Sebnem Gumuscu); fostering creativity (led by Lida Winfield); and interdisciplinary conflict analysis (led by Sarah Stroup). These CTLR workshops hosted 80 faculty. More faculty and staff are seeking ways to engage with CT. In summer and fall 2023, CT director Stroup presented to multiple Middlebury constituencies, including Human Resources (October), Admissions (October), the college faculty Curriculum Committee (November), and summer interns connected to environmental affairs (July).

CT Collaborative partners (Sarah Stroup, Vice President of Equity and Inclusion Khuram Hussain, and Democracy Initiatives leader Kristie Skor) have engaged with a higher education working group on civic measurement led by the Institute for Citizens and Scholars and Claremont-McKenna College. Hussain and Skor attended an opening workshop in May. Stroup and Skor contribute to monthly meetings to develop tools to measure civic readiness and civic opportunities. Middlebury was a co-leader of the November meeting and will join an April 2024 retreat at Georgetown.

The Collaborative has fielded inquiries and met virtually with teachers and administrators at colleges and high schools. Over the past six months, these connections include: Lara Schwartz (American University), director of the Project on Civic Dialogue; Michael Gettings (Hollins University), Assistant VP for Student Success; Ananthi Al-Ramiah (Wake Forest University), Director of Research and Strategic Integration in the Professional Schools; Nora Demleitner (St. John's College), President; Joshua Kalla (Yale), associate professor of political science (and campus visitor in October); and Will Galloway (Watershed School, Maine), Director.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

The knowledge, skills, and dispositions of CT are being integrated into many experiential offerings.

The [Privilege & Poverty Academic Cluster](#) integrates coursework with experiential learning to critically examine the causes and consequences of economic inequality. Students work with agencies and community members in law, immigration, health, food and nutrition, and housing, navigating conflict at multiple scales and utilizing conflict transformation skills. As a complement to our spring half-credit pre-departure course, we added a reflective course in the fall semester. Taught by religion professor James Davis, this helped students make meaning of their experiences and reflect on the skills and knowledge they built. As we prepare for the summer 2024 cohort, we continue to integrate CT skills and pedagogy.

We supported five Middlebury College Alternative Break Programs (MAlt) in February 2023, with a total of 63 student participants. MAlt's goal is to engage Middlebury students with national and global communities to share an experience, meet service needs, and learn about the systems that shape communities. Students lead the trips, supported by staff, including a half-credit course taught by the Center for Community Engagement (CCE) Program Director. This fall, we prepared for six trips in February 2024 that will include 73 student participants. The additional trip is in response to student demand, and even so, applications for the 2024 trips surpassed the available spots by 100%. The 2024 topics include environmental sustainability, migration justice, public health, and global economic systems in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York City, and San Diego. Trip leaders offer pre-trip educational workshops to understand the social conflicts that will frame their experiences.

Third, we funded three undergraduates in the Middlebury Social Impact Corps (MSIC) program this summer. MSIC is a partnership-based program that connects students to social change through unique experiential learning opportunities. A select cohort of College interns and MIIS graduate students are matched with a community partner for a five-week immersive program. The summer 2023 cohort worked with the [Big Sur Land Trust](#). The cohort used GIS tools to create a digital story map depicting the rich history of [Marks Ranch](#) to incorporate various perspectives into a tool available to a range of audiences. The cohort curriculum included action research methods, conflict transformation, six pillars of social impact learning, project management, intercultural communication, ethics, and digital storytelling. The cohort worked with GIS consultant Javier del Castillo of [Castle Rose Solutions](#) and Jeni Hendrickson of DLINQ, joined a resume writing workshop with MIIS's Center for Advising and Career Services, and attended a presentation on MIIS degree programs.

We supported a Social Entrepreneurship Fellow's project. An Innovation Hub-affiliated student explored ways to address global health disparities, and expanded his collaborative telehealth project in a rural hospital in Kenya to two additional clinics (see July report for more details).

We also supported a number of special projects (see July Report). These included an environmental studies class working on an immersive art space, two student participants in a national convening by [Go for Broke](#), and honoring an alumna with a public service leadership award. This fall, we hosted five National Torchbearers and two Go for Broke staff members on the Middlebury campus. During their visit, several undergraduates who participated in our 2022 History in Translation program organized and/or supported a community conversation focused on "Stories to be Told" and a visit to Middlebury Union High School to share the story of Executive Order 9066, the impact on Japanese Americans to this day, and connections to current political and social challenges.

We worked with the CT Collaborative on incorporating the CT curriculum into preparation for and reflection on these experiences. Students involved in these programs addressed a common reflection prompt through the Experiential Learning Lifecycle writing platform: "Identify a significant conflict you

observed or encountered in your work (it could be at any level of relationship: intra- or inter-personal, community/group based, and/or societal/global). How did you navigate the conflict and what would you like to learn more about as a result?” Reflections addressed how students navigated group work and leadership delegation in intercultural contexts, how they engaged in challenging intergenerational conversations that changed their assumptions about war’s impacts, and how their understanding about the most effective scale for social change work evolved.

Our summer CT convening was a great success. This hybrid event in late July brought together people in 15 Conflict Transformation-funded experiential learning programs (80 participants) to deepen their understanding and practice of conflict transformation. Participants explored CT as a framework for relationship building and social change; built connections and shared learning among students, educators, and community partners; and explored mindfulness as a skill for connecting across differences and transforming society. The Projects for Peace (PfP) Alumni Award winner Joseph Kaifala (details below) and mindfulness scholar Dr. Beth Berila each hosted educational sessions with local and global audiences (report [here](#)).

We held an October gathering to convene students who had CT-funded experiential learning summer experiences, so they could reflect on their experiences after returning to campus and consider how to incorporate their learning into their full lives (academically, professionally, and civically). Faculty and staff also participated to appreciate the students’ work and gain wisdom from their reflections. Through structured conversations over dinner, students reflected on the kinds of conflicts they encountered in their community-based work and the skills, knowledge, and dispositions they found useful for their constructive engagement.

The CT Collaborative also supports the Projects for Peace Alumni Award. This award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated innovation and commitment in building peace and transforming conflict throughout their career. We distributed applications to 100+ institutions that have partnered with Projects for Peace since 2007. We reviewed 59 nominations and five finalists, and in May we [announced the winner, Joseph Kaifala](#), Skidmore College graduate and member of the 2007 PfP inaugural class.

A survivor of the 11-year civil war in Sierra Leone, Mr. Kaifala has focused his career on peace, human rights, and rebuilding in his home country. In 2009, he launched the Jeneba Project, a nonprofit providing educational opportunities for adolescent girls. In addition, Mr. Kaifala has been concerned about the victims and survivors of the war. He helped set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2016 to provide an impartial historical record of the civil war and offer recommendations for reparations and trauma healing. In 2021 he founded the Center for Memory and Reparations, a transitional justice organization, to facilitate remembrance and collective narratives around the war. Mr. Kaifala delivered a keynote address at the 2023 Summer Convening and participated in campus gatherings at the College and at BLSE. We will announce our next PfP Alumni Award winner in May 2024 (see website [here](#)).

Our break programs have also been expanding CT offerings.

Law Advocacy and Conflict Transformation Trek to New York City: The Center for Careers and Internships (CCI) organized a fully funded four-day trip to New York City over spring break 2023. Twelve students and two staff met with 19 people to learn about real-world professional experiences that will inform their career exploration and other post-graduate planning. In March 2024 CCI in Vermont and the Center for Advising and Career Services in Monterey will facilitate a fully funded, week-long CT Career Acceleration Trek to Washington, DC for 10-12 Rohatyn Global Scholars and Fellows. Trek participants will be matched with graduate student mentors and visit organizations engaged in CT: U.S. government agencies, international NGOs, global technical assistance agencies, consulting firms, and corporations.

History in Translation 2023: Each summer, the History in Translation program brings students from diverse linguistic, cultural, and educational contexts together as a purposefully intercultural cohort to explore a historical experience or event in service of present-day social justice and the vision of an equitable and inclusive future. The 2023 History in Translation focus was language reclamation and revitalization, and a centering and exchange of Indigenous, First Nation, Native, American Indian, and Māori language, history, and culture. The participants included four staff and students of the School of Abenaki, two Middlebury undergraduates, and four teaching fellows and one faculty member from the University of Waikato Māori Office.

In the fall, three students traveled to Washington DC to attend *Defining Courage* at the Kennedy Center, a “Docu Theater” event sharing the legacy of the 442nd and other Nisei soldiers of World War II.

We funded 22 domestic and international summer internships related to conflict transformation and supported by the CCI (two cohorts [[diiVe](#), [Team for Tech](#)] and three individuals). CT funds supported 19 internships for students working in nations rebuilding after generations of war and conflict.

- This included 13 student internships (11 in-person and two remote) with diiVe, an organization based in South Africa that provides students with consulting projects in the shared value, sustainability, and strategy space. diiVe implemented a conflict transformation curriculum for all interns, presenting conflict as essential for change and building skills to embrace that potential. This fall, we recorded a podcast interviewing diiVe founder and CEO Elspeth Boynton about diiVe’s approach to Conflict Transformation curriculum. Two students will be working with diiVe over Winter Term 2024 in preparation for summer 2024.
- Six students traveled to Uganda with Team4Tech, a Silicon Valley based nonprofit that helps education-focused NGOS in the developing world.
- Three students participated in individual internships in international development, international education, and the environment. These internships included working for the United Nations in the Middle Eastern Unit’s Office for Disarmament Affairs; developing CT curricula for the Middlebury School in France; and policy research for the Institute of Climate and Peace.

CT funds are also supporting two Winter Term interns for the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at MIIS, one intern for Middlebury’s OIDEI, and another to work in a community mental health model and setting for overcoming trauma in Chile.

We helped create internships for students from multiple institutions with the Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty (SHECP), an organization that fosters the study of the causes and consequences of economic inequality. SHECP focused on two main initiatives for this initial year: launching a new Policy and Nonprofit Leadership (PNPL) Internship cohort and the development and implementation of a CT curriculum for two other, standard cohorts of interns. The piloted curriculum from summer 2023 will be applied to all incoming student interns in 2024.

- The PNPL interns (Washington and Lee and Bucknell Universities) worked with the Brookings Institution, the National Community Action Foundation, and the United Planning Organization.
- SHECP worked with Katy Gray Brown (Manchester University) to pilot a CT curriculum with interns in the Shamokin, PA and Richmond, VA cohorts. The students completed two trainings with Dr. Gray Brown this summer.

GRADUATE TRAINING AND RESEARCH IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Our 2022 report described an interdisciplinary approach to conflict transformation developed for graduate education. We have developed a program with three types of CT Graduate Fellows. In 2023, there were a total of 65 Fellows in our graduate programs. The Fellows will present their work at the CT Annual Seminar, which will be held May 10, 2024 on campus at MIIS and also via online means.

Cohort Fellows (41): We had 93 applicants for our Cohort Fellowship in the fall. We selected 36 Fellows including new and continuing students, and online and in-person/Monterey-based students from all degree programs at MIIS. We included a Language Schools MA student in the cohort for the first time as well. Each fellow received a stipend to focus on an interdisciplinary conflict transformation-related project. We received 37 applications for incoming students for the spring 2024 group, and accepted five students. For more information about the Fellows and their projects, see:

- MiddCreate: <https://gradct.middcreate.net/fellows/>
- Flip videos: <https://flip.com/groups/15017283/topics/38150259/responses>
- CT Podcast [Episode 3](#), with MIIS students Dylan Moglen & Alex Christodolou

CT GA Fellows (15): In summer and fall 2023 we continued our work with MIIS centers, initiatives, faculty, and staff to provide CT Graduate Assistant Fellowship opportunities focused on CT-related projects in a range of fields. We supported the following GA fellows from August–December 2023, noting the MIIS centers where appropriate:

- Center for the Blue Economy 2 (Ocean Climate Action Project)
- Center for Terrorism, Extremism, & Counterterrorism 2 (Diverting Hate)
- MetaLab 4 (Housing Security Scorecard)
- Immersive Learning 1 (CT/ICC/EL Faculty Guide)
- Center for Nonproliferation Studies 1 (Critical Issues Forum)
- Mural Histories Project, Queer International Students 2 (1 each)
- Poetry Anthology 3

Pedagogy Fellows (2): The Pedagogy Fellows are graduate students supporting other CT programs. Two students supported Pillar 1 summer programs, and one of those students continues to support the Pillar 4 programs.

Mentor Fellows (7): This year we instituted the Mentor Fellows program, in which seven former Cohort Fellows provided support, guidance, and resources to mini-cohorts of current Cohort Fellows. This model has worked very well in terms of peer-to-peer learning, deepened engagement around CT frameworks, and connections across the cohort overall.

In addition to these fellows, we have supported graduate students in other parts of Middlebury, including the Language Schools and the School in France.

We also expanded our event offerings at the Institute in 2023. In the fall, Pillar Head Netta Avineri moderated the CT faculty research panel (September 13) and a panel discussion with sujatha baliga (restorative justice leader) and Sarah Stroup (CT Collaborative director) on “Restoring Justice, Cultivating Hope” (September 27). We convened a faculty/staff lunch focused on bringing CT pedagogies into MIIS classrooms, and cosponsored other campus offerings, including International Peace Day (September 21), the Multilingual Mini-Monterey Model (October 25 and November 1), the McCone Mural Dedication (November 8), and a workshop for CT fellows with BtP’s Craig Maravich on CT and creativity (November 3). For new students, we facilitated an orientation session called “Navigating Culture, Change, and Conflict at MIIS” with approximately 150 students.

Ongoing engagement with Indigenous community partners, the Ohlone Sisters, included developing MIIS' new land acknowledgement and joining an Indigenous storytelling event with faculty, staff, and students. They shared songs and stories at the mural dedication celebration.

This fall we also supported six programs and several individual projects that provided community engagement opportunities, including: MIIS Immersive Learning (distributed to four global courses and individual students' programs): Anne Campbell & Phil Murphy's "Nationalism and New States in the Balkans" immersive learning course; and one MIIS Scholar and the faculty director for the Middlebury Social Impact Corps program.

We are planning our CT Dialogue and CT Faculty/Staff Lunch for spring 2024. The CT Faculty/Staff Lunch will be facilitated by DLINQ colleagues and focus on "Co-design as conflict transformation: Working toward successful partnerships in course, curriculum, and program design."

The CT Collaborative also supports the Critical Issues Forum (CIF) at MIIS. During the second half of 2023, major activities included: 1) Summer Students Conference in Monterey, 2) Speaker Series event with a CIF alumna from Japan, and 3) participation in the BLTN/NextGen Conference at the Santa Fe Indian School.

- *The 2023 CIF Summer Student Conference*: 48 students and teachers from across the United States and Japan gathered in Monterey for the summer [Critical Issues Forum](#) conference (July 28-29). This was the first in-person meeting after three years of virtual activities. The CIF focuses on engaging high school students in peace and security topics for a world free of nuclear weapons. This year's topic was *Bringing Intersectional Approaches to Youth Education for Nuclear Disarmament and Nonproliferation*. The CIF conference laid the foundation for [student presentations](#) to a live audience. For more, see the [conference report](#) and [supplemental article](#).
- *Speaker Series event with a CIF alumna from Japan*: this occasional series is open to the public and brings critical content to high schools. On September 27, CNS [hosted Anju Niwata](#). Anju Niwata is a student at [the University of Tokyo](#) and a CIF alumna. She discussed her process of colorizing photos of Hiroshima from WWII using AI technology as well as consulting Hibakusha, atomic bombing survivors, drawing from her exhibitions and award-winning book. Fifty participants attended this talk (in person and online).
- *Participation in the BLTN/Next Gen Conference*: for the second year, CIF project manager Masako Toki participated in the BLTN/NextGen Conference. Participating schools included Middlebury Union High School, Santa Fe Indian High School, several high schools from Jefferson County in Kentucky, Aiken High School in South Carolina, and more.

We are preparing for the CIF Spring 2024 Conference, April 4-6. We expect four to five Japanese high schools and up to ten U.S. schools, to participate, including three BLTN high schools. We held an information session for schools interested in participating in December.

GLOBAL LITERACY AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

At the Middlebury-C.V. Starr Schools Abroad, we continued to develop a variety of CT programming for Middlebury and non-Middlebury students alike around the world. Experiences ranged from scholarships and semester-long academic internships to pre-excursion orientation and involvement with local NGOs.

All programming approaches interpersonal, intercultural, and international conflicts through the theoretical lens of CT. At the close of this second year, our goal has been to link each CT project more tightly with the CT framework of analysis so that participants emerge with a clearer understanding of what CT is and the concrete role it can play in identifying, understanding, and handling conflicts. As such, we have made progress on the depth of CT analysis happening within each program.

School of the Environment: Four faculty and 23 students participated in a training course organized by the Udall Foundation's John S. McCain III National Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution. Fourteen Middlebury students and nine non-Middlebury students participated. This two-day course, entitled *Understanding Conflict and Planning for Successful Collaboration*, took place June 28-29, 2023, in Monterey, California. The course helped participants apply a CT lens to their School of the Environment curriculum, focusing on environmental collaboration and conflict resolution in the realm of environmental justice. (Number of students – Midd: 14 Non-Midd: 9)

Schools in Argentina & Uruguay: As part of their required Culture and Writing course, students from Buenos Aires (the School in Argentina) and Montevideo (the School in Uruguay) spent four days in Neuquén, Argentina to learn about the emerging conflict between the oil industry and Indigenous communities over land and water sustainability following the *Vaca Muerta* oil reserve's discovery in 2010. In the city of Neuquén, students visited museums and attended lectures regarding local conflictual interpretations of national history, memory, and identity. Neuquén has experienced rapid growth in the last century, based mainly on oil and gas, hydroelectric energy, and fruit exports. This has created complex tensions among stakeholders, including the Indigenous Mapuche community, local workers, the federal government, and transnational mining corporations. Through direct contact and exchange with different local voices and communities, this excursion aimed to expose students directly to the interests, needs, and positions of local actors and to conflicts not commonly seen in students' host cities nor taught in general university classes. (Number of students – Midd: 2 Non-Midd: 6)

School in Uruguay: Students participated in an ongoing collaboration with [REDALCO](#), a local NGO focused on the social injustice of unequal food distribution. Students learned about the group's recovery of discarded food and redistribution to disadvantaged communities and sectors through three stages. First, students participated in the process of recovering discarded edible food at the Central Market. Then, they visited one of the communities receiving REDALCO food donations and cooked a shared meal at a local Ollas Populares (Soup Kitchen). Finally, students attended a lecture on the concept and tensions of inequitable food distribution in Montevideo and heard from experts about viable solutions. (Number of students – Midd: 0 Non-Midd: 2)

School in France and Office of International Programs: This fall, one Middlebury student began a year-long stint as the CT Fellow in Middlebury's office of International Programs and Off Campus Study. This student spent the fall semester refining the first edition of the *Schools Abroad CT Toolkit* and collaborating with visiting MIIS International Education Management (IEM) scholar Dr. David Wick to incorporate CT into the experiential learning curriculum for students completing credit-bearing internships at the Schools Abroad in France and Spain. This involved mapping CT language onto existing internship reflection questions to prompt critical self-awareness about conflicts inherent to intercultural and intergenerational experiential learning. Working across the Schools Abroad, the CT Fellow supported the development of a CT course at the School in Cameroon, offered general support to Schools Abroad

Directors for pending CT project proposals, and provided administrative support in preparing the CT grant end-of-year report. This student shared this of their experience as the first CT Fellow: “As a CT Fellow I have been exposed to the more intricate components of international, intercultural education and been given the freedom to explore and innovate the ways transformative approaches to conflict can shape college students during their time abroad.” (Number of students – Midd: 1 Non-Midd: 0)

School in Spain: As part of the fall semester orientation, the School in Spain added a CT component. Students participated in a tribute at a Stolpersteine stone in Madrid. Stolpersteine is a small concrete block bearing a brass plate inscribed with the name and life dates of Nazi victims. Stolpersteine means 'stumbling stone' and is the 1992 work of German artist Gunter Demnig that aims to commemorate the last place of residency freely chosen by the person before they fell victim to Nazi terror. 75,000 Stolpersteine have been laid across Europe, making it the world's largest decentralized memorial. Students heard from two Madrid Stolpersteine project volunteers and the niece of two Nazi-deported Spanish men. Many Spanish victims of the Nazis were supporters of the democratic Republican government defeated by Franco's army during the Spanish Civil War. These victims had been exiled in France and were later deported to Nazi concentration camps. Through memory restoration, the Stolpersteine blocks remind us of the effects of European fascism and connect students with the recent past of Spain and Germany. (Number of students – Midd: 24 Non-Midd: 17)

School in Japan: Prior to an excursion to a traditional Japanese mountain village, students participated in an orientation module designed by an intern from the MIIS IEM program. This module uses CT as a framework for preparing and reflecting on the cultural differences and conflicts that might arise between students and residents when on excursions. This training module focused on contextual knowledge and the dispositions required to transform misunderstanding and tension into learning and growth. Pre- and post- field trip conversations allowed students to express their concerns, disappointments, and discomfort freely. Using the framework of conflict transformation, students reflected on what they learned about Japanese culture, what they learned about their own culture, and how they responded to instances of inter and intra-personal conflict. (Number of students – Midd: 8 Non-Midd: 11 MIIS: 1 intern)

FACULTY RESEARCH

The faculty research program provides an exciting opportunity for our faculty, and many projects have been featured in public events.

- In September 2023 we convened a panel of the 2022 grant recipients to identify new insights into conflict ([recording here](#)). The 2022 recipients' final reports are available on our website ([here](#)).
- Sarah Bidgood, (2022 research grant recipient) has been invited to speak about “strategic empathy” at the U.S. Defense Department's Defense Threat Reduction Agency in spring 2024.
- The Dance Department’s “Global Body in Conflict” series (2023 recipients) has held multiple performances and workshops throughout the year, culminating in a final workshop in honor of MLK Jr. Day in January 2024.
- Laurie Essig and Carly Thomsen (2023 grant recipients) held a public symposium on November 30 to highlight the student projects that emerged from their exploration of conflicts between feminist studies and feminist activists ([here](#)).

We will convene the 2023 grant recipients in spring 2024 and add their reports to our website.

The 2024 application cycle was overseen by CT program manager Erin Anderson and advised by Sarah Stroup and Pillar 4 head Netta Avineri. Four faculty—Jeffrey Knopf (MIIS), David Wick (MIIS), Jamie McCallum (College), and Lida Winfield (College), served as the selection committee. For the 2024 award cycle, the committee received 30 applications from across the College and Institute, representing a range of disciplines and proposing a diverse array of outputs and dissemination plans. To evaluate each proposal, the committee began with four criteria: the substantive relationship of the project to conflict transformation, contribution to knowledge, feasibility, and impact potential. The committee also considered disciplinary diversity, support across the institution, and revisions to proposals received in a prior round to incorporate deeper engagement with conflict and transformation.

Eleven projects were selected within the total annual budget of \$500,000 to support faculty research.

- Dima Ayoub, “Translating Conflict: Literary Diplomacy in the Westward Movement of Arabic Literature” (Arabic)
- Merril Baker-Medard, Charlotte Nagnisaha, and Tolaira Vololonavalona Ravelo, “Decolonizing Conservation: from marine dispossession to self-determination in Madagascar” (Environmental Studies)
- Erica Barbarossa and Isabela Bernardo, “Examining the Mixed Ideological Motivations of Mass Shooters and School Shooters” (Center on Terrorism, Extremism and Counterterrorism)
- Allison Berke, “Avoiding Conflict through Verification: Assessing and Updating Proposed Biological Weapons Convention Verification Measures” (Center for Nonproliferation Studies)
- Michole Biancosino, “Shifting the Culture in the Rehearsal Room” (Theater)
- Amy Cooter and Robin O’Luanaigh, “Moms for Liberty: Normalizing Cultural Conflict” (Center on Terrorism, Extremism and Counterterrorism)
- Sebnem Gumuscu, “Building Coalitions to Subvert Democracy: Coercion, Conviction, and Cooptation in Turkey” (Political Science)
- Matthew Kimble, “Building Consensus Around Trigger Warnings” (Psychology)
- Heekyeong Lee, “Promoting Intercultural Citizenship and Social-Emotional Learning in an English Classroom for North-Korean Refugee-Background Students” (TESOL/TFL)
- Nomsa Ndongwe and Sophia Poteet, “Lost in Translation? Discussing Gender in Multilateral Disarmament” (Center for Nonproliferation Studies)
- Katherine Puntenev, “Conflict Transformation for International Educators” (International Education Management)

CROSS-PILLAR INITIATIVES

Each Pillar of the CT Collaborative is led by a faculty or staff member with expertise, resources, and relationships that facilitate the design and execution of a wide array of programs. The CT Collaborative staff meet individually and collectively with this group to develop a core set of commitments, strengthen communication and relationships, and consulting where appropriate. We convened Pillar Head meetings in December 2022, April 2023, and October 2023. In addition, we held a two-day retreat in Vermont in August 2023 for Pillar Heads and CT Collaborative partners.

Our engagement with the CT Collaborative External Advisory Board has deepened. The eight members of the Board are Naazneen Barma, Sigal Ben-Porath, David Campt, Susan Clark, Peter Dixon, John Paul Lederach, Jonathan Owsley, and Nancy Thomas ([bios available here](#)). At our August meeting, we shared our mid-year report and each Pillar Head shared a key learning goal from their new programs. The Board members emphasized the importance of “habits of the heart and mind” (curiosity, humility, empathy), proactive transformations of communities and institutions, and the importance of scale, working across all levels of relationships and institutions.

Communication and Partnership

Communication and partnerships have been a core strategic goal in this second year. We have been working on ways to expand our reach and have developed new ways to share our messaging.

- *Podcast*: This fall, the Collaborative launched a new podcast series, *Opening Up* (podcast website [here](#)), with new episodes every two weeks.
- *Website*: We have a new image for the CT Collaborative website. This fall we added a video library to house recordings of our expert guests. Our global partnerships are more visible and we post public versions of our reports and newsletters on our “resources” page.
- *Newsletter*: We distribute a fall, winter, and spring newsletter to internal and external partners.
- *Instagram*: Since launching in spring 2023, our Instagram has 260 followers and is a space to advertise our talks and events and explain our mission.

Other organizations and media outlets have sought to understand and elevate our work.

- The CT Collaborative and Engaged Listening Project were featured in a report from Interfaith America and More Perfect on *Bridgebuilding in Higher Education*. The report highlighted 14 campuses and their efforts to address political polarization and conflict across religious and ideological divides (report [here](#)).
- CT and ELP work on fostering free expression was featured in a September 2023 report from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* ([link here](#)).
- Producers from two major media outlets reached out to learn about Middlebury’s work for stories on higher education, including PBS’s “America at a Crossroads” series and NBC News.
- The local Addison Independent continues to highlight our work, in September ([link](#)), December ([link](#)), and this December description of the high school dialogue we supported ([link](#)).
- The student newspaper has discussed the CT Collaborative work on Israel and Palestine, describing our efforts ([link](#)) and calling for more constructive engagement ([link](#)).

Externally, we continue to build important new relationships and networks.

Global and National Constituencies

- We are a new member of the [Alliance for Peacebuilding](#).
- We have connected with [Bridge USA](#), a national network for peer-led campus dialogues.
- At the National Coalition on Dialogue and Deliberation conference in October, Stroup joined a panel presentation led by Essential Partners and connected with Martin Carcasson (Director; CSU

Center for Public Deliberation), Graham Bullock (Director, Davidson College Deliberative Citizenship Initiative), and Maria Stephan (co-lead, Horizons Project; former USIP).

- Go For Broke National Education Center (see Experiential Learning above) has been a CCE partner since 2022. Their National Torchbearers fellowship offers programming on identity, social action, dialogues, and allyship for young adults, and Middlebury is currently their sole academic partner nationwide.
- 20 alumni at Alumni College joined a “CT Skills Course,” including leaders in corporate, nonprofit, media, and global development organizations. Two alums have since reached out for consultation to apply the CT Skills methodology in their own workplaces.
- MIIS alumni learned from Professor Avineri and three students at a MIIS MBA Alumni (25 year) Reunion event on November 3.
- Avineri has been working with the Adam Institute for Democracy and Peace (Israel), Planet Forward, and will present at the Intercultural Competence Conference in spring 2024 (<https://icc.arizona.edu/>)

Local Constituencies (Vermont and California)

- In 2023, Middlebury became a member and key supporter of the Vermont Restorative Approaches Collaborative (VTRAC). The CT Collaborative has supported the VTRAC website and hosted UP for Learning director Lindsey Halman for an October workshop (15 participants).
- We are deepening partnerships with the community in Monterey, including CSU Monterey Bay, Stevenson School, the Naval Postgraduate School, and Community Builders of Monterey County.
- In Vermont, we are working with Environmental Affairs director Jack Byrne, executive scholar in residence Frank Van Gansbeke, and Signal Kitchen to support a major conference at the Bread Loaf campus in May 2024. *Beyond Bretton Woods* will focus on a participatory process with students from the Global North and Global South to design global governance institutions upon the 80th anniversary of the 1944 Bretton Woods institutions.
- Pillar 4 Head Netta Avineri gave three public talks on intercultural communication and conflict transformation: at the McCain Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders on the Rule of Law and Public Service at MIIS, Critical Issues Forum, and the BLSE Institute for Global Humanities.

Campus Conflicts on Israel and Palestine

As with many college campuses, conversations about Israel and Palestine since October 7 have become more challenging and more important. At the College, proactive efforts and cross-campus collaborations throughout 2023 have helped facilitate more constructive conversations. In late 2022, director Stroup and Pillar 2 head Sebnem Gumuscu were asked to bring CT approaches to campus conversations about Israel and Palestine. In spring 2023, we began with two dozen coffees and lunches with students, staff, and faculty to explore a simple but difficult question: “How can we have a more constructive conversation at Middlebury about Israel and Palestine?” We held three dinner dialogue events in April and May.

Before and after October 7, we have continuously sought to identify what people need, work with campus partners to help identify resources to meet those needs, and design events and opportunities that will serve our educational purpose based on an ethic of compassion. As co-sponsors of a weeklong residency (October 23-27) for the filmmakers of *Spaces of Exception* (featuring experiences of Palestinians and Native Americans), we framed the film screening with CT principles and hosted a separate dinner for Palestinians and their allies. We co-sponsored a Scott Center interfaith panel on compassion, justice, and nonviolence (October 25) and a talk by Swarthmore College’s Peace and Conflict Studies director Sa’ed Atshan (November 13). We hosted three campus-wide dialogue events: October 30 dinner (50 participants), December 1 lunch (12 participants), and December 8 breakfast (8 participants). Fruitful conversations with student leaders in the Student Government Association, Community Council, and the Campus newspaper will inform future programming.

Our work on Israel and Palestine dialogues has been shared with many partners. Drawing from the facilitation scripts developed at the College, students and staff at Vergennes Union High School in Vermont hosted a dialogue event on December 14th with 35 community members. We also shared the scripts with a group of college presidents, board member David Campt, Essential Partners, and American University's Lara Schwartz.

Program Goals and Assessment

In addition to the three core learning goals described in the introduction, each CT program may have additional learning outcomes relevant to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions central to conflict transformation. As detailed in our 2022 report, the Middlebury approach views conflict transformation as a compass—it tells us what to tend to as we negotiate conflict. Within this broad approach, various streams of work foster constructive conflict. The CT Collaborative at Middlebury seeks to expand a specific list of knowledge, skills, and dispositions of our students, staff, and partners.

- *Knowledge*: Good conflict intervention starts with good conflict analysis.
 - Contextual knowledge involves extensive learning about the actors, dynamics, history, and values that have shaped a conflict.
 - Critical self-awareness asks: “Who am I in conflict?” People have different conflict styles, personality traits, histories, strengths, and challenges.
- *Skills*: Several approaches to conflict can help disrupt destructive dynamics.
 - Structured dialogue encourages participants to listen to understand.
 - Intercultural competence engages across different frames of references and values.
 - Mediation identifies the interests behind conflicting positions to support problem-solving.
 - Restorative practices encourage accountability for harm while repairing relationships.
- *Dispositions*: People can conduct themselves in ways that foster constructive conflict.
 - Curiosity reveals deeper insights into views and experiences that are not our own.
 - Creativity helps generate new possibilities to move beyond harmful patterns.
 - Risk-taking is necessary, since first attempts may not succeed.
 - A relational focus sees human connection as a place to redefine purpose

Establishing our goals, and then developing assessment mechanisms to track progress towards those goals, has been a key focus of this second year. Below, we share brief selections from surveys and reflection tools. Next year we seek to expand and synthesize new assessment mechanisms.

- *Follow-up Survey of faculty and staff, August 2023 CTLR Teaching and Writing Retreat*
- *Follow-up Survey of participants in October 30 Israel-Palestine Dialogue Dinner.*
- *Selection reflections and feedback*
 - MIIS CT Fellows
 - Study Abroad Reflections
 - Post-experience reflections

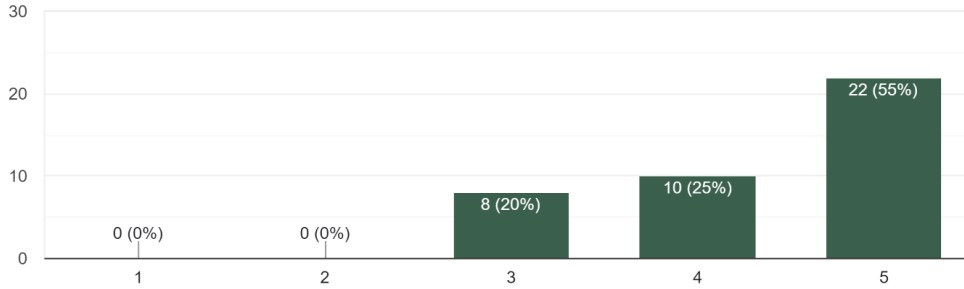
SELECT SURVEY DATA AND REFLECTIONS

Follow-Up Survey, Teaching and Writing Retreat (August 2023), CTLR

(1= not effective, 5 = very effective)

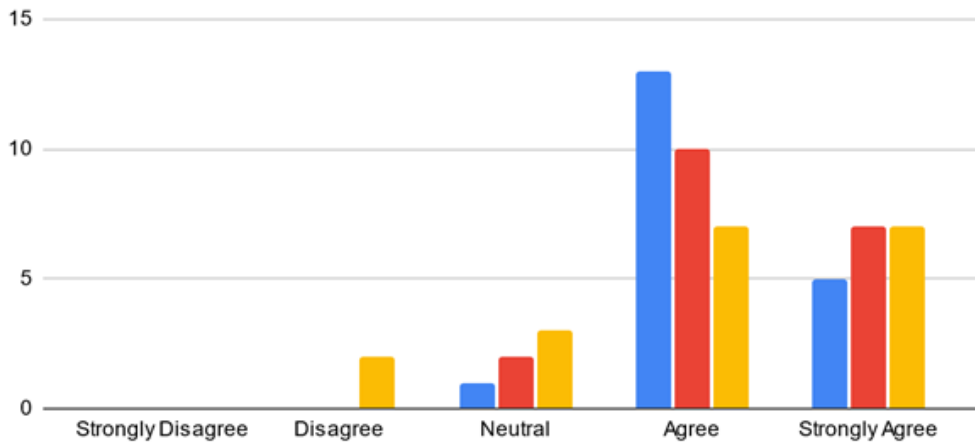
On Tuesday morning, Sarah Stroup presented on "Conflict Transformation" at Middlebury, along with break-out facilitators, Sebnem Gumuscu, Genie Giai...conflict transformation skills into the classroom.

40 responses



Follow-up Survey October 30 Israel-Gaza Dinner Dialogue

- I felt like the time spent at the dinner dialogue was worthwhile.
- The facilitated small group format invited listening and the exchange of perspectives.
- I had an opportunity to hear perspectives and experiences different from my own.



Select Reflections and Feedback

MIIS CT Fellows, May 2023 (Pillar 4): respondents were asked to share at least two takeaways about conflict transformation that you have gained from participating in the CT program.

- “One takeaway was the positives that can come from conflict, the ways that it can be transformed in healthy ways. The other was understanding the historical nature of conflicts and the longstanding grievances that can significantly alter the conflict and how it can be addressed.”
- “I’ve started automatically thinking about everything through a CT lens in all of my classes regardless of the course topic. Additionally, I’ve gotten lots of practice in revising a project into something completely different, but much better, than what I originally envisioned.”
- “It’s a lens or perspective that can be applied to many fields and kinds of conflict, ranging from interpersonal to international.”
- “I’ve definitely learned more about multidisciplinary analysis and how essential it is to the conflict transformation process. In addition, I’ve learned about how conflicts may be falsely

solved, and then reappear in the future—the dynamics will have changed with the world, but the core conflict remains because it was never truly solved, and the grievance has been passed down through generations.”

Study Abroad Reflections (Pillar 5)

- “Immersion in an unfamiliar cultural context and an ability to lean into difference allows us to explore the very essence of conflict transformation: that episodes of conflict are motors of change and opportunities for growth. With this mindset of growth and a positive, productive view of conflict and hardship I am a better learner, friend, partner, teammate, and citizen.” *Agnes Roche '24.5, Political Science and French double major, School Abroad in France*

Post-Experience Reflections, Summer 2023 (Pillar 3): participants were asked to “Identify a significant conflict you observed or encountered in your work (it could be at any level of relationship: intra- or inter-personal, community/group based, and/or societal/global). How did you navigate the conflict and what would you like to learn more about as a result?”

- “During my diiVe consulting internship, I worked with a team that consisted of a typical consulting team structure. We found the group dynamic to be negatively impacted by the split leadership and lack of pyramid structure. There were a lot of unspoken qualms and rising tensions, and I could sense that our team’s direction was becoming scattered. What followed were tough yet honest conversations between myself, my co-lead, and my fellow teammates. I did my best to create an open space for transparency and constructive criticism. After having those conversations and personal reflection, I decided it would be in the team’s and our project’s best interest for myself to step down from Project co-lead and take on another Research Lead position. As much as I wanted to lead the team and felt fit to lead, I want to put aside any selfish intent and do what was best for the group.” *Youness Cheboubi, Diive intern South Africa*
- “My journey to Copenhagen left me with a profound learning experience. It became evident to me that people in the city have a genuine enthusiasm for biking to work and schools. The government has effectively encouraged this mode of transportation by making car usage less convenient... As I reflected on this situation, I couldn’t help but think about my own country, Taiwan, and how we might create a more environmentally friendly capital city. These thoughts brought up several potential conflicts in my mind. Drawing from my personal experiences in conflict resolution, I’ve come to appreciate the significance of comprehensively exploring various perspectives and gaining an in-depth understanding of each involved party. This understanding enables us to carefully evaluate potential solutions, communicate effectively, and implement the most promising ones. On a personal level, I’ve faced a conflict regarding my academic pursuits...Active involvement in such endeavors has enhanced my self-awareness and provided clarity regarding my genuine needs. While my priorities and choices might differ from those of others, they resonate better with my personal disposition.” *Yu-Ting Thai, DIS Trip to Copenhagen*
- “Language as a point of conflict came up while on a two-week program looking at Scandinavian approaches to environmental conflict. When traveling to the agrarian island of Samsø, Denmark, a farmer explained that he doesn’t believe climate change has affected his business much...The farmer’s remarks make me further question the importance of shared meaning, how that can include or exclude, and where lines should be drawn around adjusting vocabulary regarding climate change and environmental conflict. The terms climate change and climate variations are ostensibly the same, albeit if we perhaps negotiate some linguistic nuance. So, if using the term climate variations helps the farmer to get on board with climate action, then should we bend to that adjustment in language, or is there value in pushing the use of the term climate change?” *Andrea Regalbutto, DIS Trip to Copenhagen*