مدارس مسك Misk Schools & Stanford MEDICINE | Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE) & ReadyAi

Stanford/CCARE leads a 6-month Design Empathy course with the world-renowned Misk Schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Starting 9-June 2024 and continuing until 14-November 2024 a select group of Misk Schools girls' and boys' students (8-12th grade) are participating in a Stanford Medicine / CCARE led course on experiential Design Empathy. The topic is imagining, designing, and simulating a compassionate and resilient 'smart' town plan, all based on regenerative and circular principles.

James Ehrlich, Director of Compassionate Sustainability at Stanford CCARE developed this innovative program with his colleague Alexandra Albinus and the ReGen_U design team. Creating a journey for the students to play the role of a "design department inside of a virtual large company," students were tasked to design a resilient smart town inside the boundaries of the real-world Misk City development, which is currently under construction as part of the brilliant **Vision2030** plan from his Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia.

During the in-person summer class that took place from 9-14 June 2024, students had three primary work areas: For brainstorming ideas, designing a diorama with foam cut models, and using laptops for transforming their designs into digital realms. Another team challenge was to build a physical house (shoebox size), based on passive home design criteria, and then placing the model homes outside for 48-hours to test climate assumptions with embedded sensors.

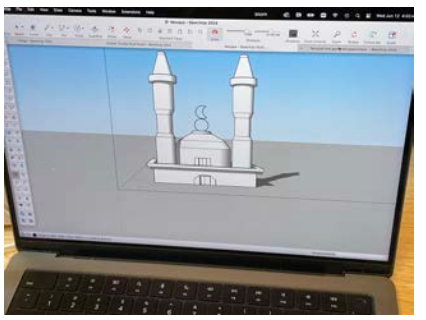
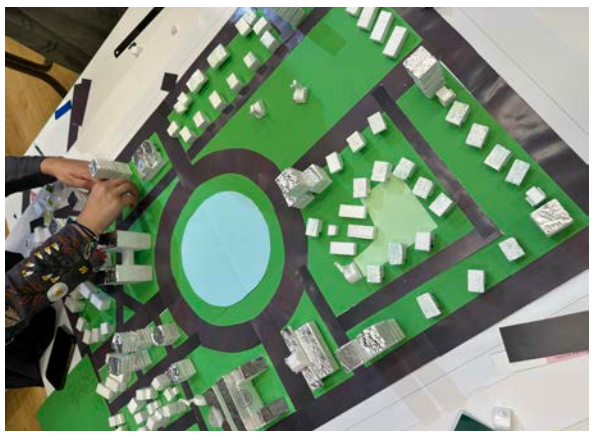
Assigned to small teams of 4-5 students, boys, and girls (separated on different sides of the lecture hall), are given the objective to creatively iterate toward a unified master plan they all agree to focus on for the final presentation.

Students are introduced to Design Empathy which is the first step in achieving proven successful teams, by deeply listening, being mindful, and accepting all input as constructive toward shared objectives. Dr. Doty, the Founding Director of CCARE provided guided morning mindful meditation practices for the students via pre-recorded videos relevant to each day's program.

Instructors front row left to right Ramya Sivaprasad, Lena Blanc, Alex Albinus, Zhinoos Mobasherfar,
Back row right to left James Ehrlich, Joan Savall , Zephyr Simus,, Roozbeh Aliabadi, & Hillal Kara-Ali, (Misk Schools)

Through the lens of compassionate sustainability, students are provided local climate content and context to inform resiliency and natural capacity resources into their design thinking. Another workshop challenge presented was how best to keep their town infrastructure running in case of district utility interruptions.




Digital designing with the students is continuing via zoom from 10-September 2024 until students present at the Cityscape conference in Riyadh on 14-November 2024. The final presentation will integrate students Sketch-up™ software models converted to the Unreal game engine™ and Twin Motion™ for high-fidelity animations, and then programmed within the VillageOS™ software for the students to drive demonstrations of their town designs within an interactive simulation.

Dr. Steffen Sommer, Director of Misk Schools is profoundly impressed with the program thus far, stating, "it's quite amazing to see how in the first 5-days of hands-on activities the students were able to progress so quickly in their understanding of the design tasks and tools at hand. This is such a unique opportunity for Misk students, and we are all quite excited to see them present their final project in November at Cityscape in Riyadh."

Dr. Doty shares the enthusiasm to continue this impactful program with Misk Schools, "we are in deep gratitude to Dr. Sommer, Vice Principal Hillal Kara-Ali, and all the teachers and staff at Misk Schools, as well as these exceptional Misk students who continue to explore what compassionate, resilient and regenerative design means for the benefit of people and planet."

CCARE also established a working collaboration with the Carnegie Mellon University spin-off ReadyAi in framing opportunities with Ai, Machine Learning and robotics to inspire students to imagine innovative and autonomous solutions for improving quality of life.

CCARE and ReadyAi are also engaged in providing a longitudinal white paper to further enhance and develop programs with Misk Schools in tracking measurable positive outcomes from these summer-to-autumn courses, with the hope to return for many more class years ahead (Insha'Allah).

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