



Session on “Systems Thinking” by Youth Alliance

On 15th September 2022, Mr. Shashank Kalra, Ms. Aarti Jain and Mr. Rahul – team members of Youth Alliance – held an interactive session on Systems Thinking for students of all three courses of Cluster Innovation Centre [B.Tech. (IT&MI), B.A. Hons HSS and M.Sc. ME].

The session started with an introduction to the “Butterfly Effect” by the Director of CIC, Dr. Shobha Bagai; who explained how a minor disturbance in any ecosystem can create a ripple effect and impact all systems in the long run.



Subsequently, Mr. Shashank Kalra, CEO of Youth Alliance, took over the proceedings and involved all the attendees in a highly interesting and informative role-play, through which he explained the interconnectedness and interdependence of all things in a simple way.

The students were divided into two groups. Students from one group were asked to stand in a circle and given placards identifying them as various biotic and abiotic elements. They were then asked to connect to another element that they felt was related to them, using a string. The role of the second group was observational. It was seen that, soon, an intricate, interconnected web was formed, and removal of even one element from the web had an impact on all other elements.



Hence, it became clear that even seemingly disparate elements are part and parcel of the same ecosystem and interlinked with each other. Even smaller elements that were often overlooked in forming these links were found to be equally vital to the ecosystem. The speaker then explained how this principle applies to all other arenas of life; citing common examples like connections between various organs of the body, between different academic fields, et cetera.

Attendees were then shown a documentary explaining how, several decades ago, overuse of DDT to eradicate anopheles mosquitos in Borneo eventually led to a decline in the population of cats; aptly demonstrating the Butterfly Effect.

The speakers further expounded on the pitfalls of finding short-term solutions to problems, and how these temporary fixes tend to overlook the ripple effect and can themselves cause adverse long-term consequences. Attendees also participated enthusiastically and came up with various examples from everyday life, where they have observed such lacunae in long-term and systemic thinking.

Through this vibrant session, the importance of systemic thinking that considers the interconnectedness and interdependence of all things, over short-term solutionism, was deeply impressed upon the participants. The attendees were also given the details of the central idea behind Youth Alliance – which aims to foster such systemic thinking.

The session ended with an interactive question and answer segment, of which the students and faculty of CIC were very enthusiastic and involved participants.



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