

EIT Food Inequality V1.mp3

Matt Eastland [00:00:06] Every day, people all over the world struggle to feed themselves and their families, even though we produce enough food to go around, up to 800 and 11 million people still go to bed hungry. And nearly one in three people in the world, so that's almost 2.4 billion people, didn't even have access to adequate food in 2020. In a time when half of the world is ordering hot meals to their door without even leaving the sofa. Why is it that a huge segment of the global population are still not eating well?

[00:00:41] I'm Matt Eastland and welcome to The Food Fight podcast from EIT Food, exploring the greatest challenges facing the food system and the innovations and entrepreneurs looking to solve them. And with me today are two incredible guests who have committed their careers to tackling food inequity and inequality. First of all, a warm welcome to go to Gerda Verburg, the United Nations Assistant Secretary General and Coordinator of Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, which is known as the SUN movement. Gerda has extensive experience in politics and international cooperation, having previously served as Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands before also being elected as chair of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and many other International Food Security and Nutrition Forum since. Gerda, welcome to the show.

Gerda Verburg [00:01:30] Thank you very much. Happy to be here.

Matt Eastland [00:01:33] Great, thank you. And joining us in the UK is Lucy Antal, Senior Regional Project Manager for Feedback Global, a food citizenship charity developing new networks of sustainable food projects and promoting a circular economy approach to food surplus. Lucy is also a research associate at the University of Liverpool and member of the International Commission on the Anthropology of Food Nutrition, and is involved in a myriad of other grass roots food and sustainability projects. Lucy, great to have you on the show.

Lucy Antal [00:02:03] My pleasure. Thank you for having me.

Matt Eastland [00:02:06] Great. Thank you both. So just to kind of start off, then I guess it's worth saying that I am really humbled to be in the company of you both because it's been very clear how much passion and dedication both of you had put into this particular space over your career. So it's a real pleasure. And I'd like to speak today about some strategies for tackling food inequality and inequity. And I think it's also worth pointing out that this is a hugely complex field. Malnutrition exists in all its forms in both developed and developing countries and across all socio economic groups. So this is a huge topic we're trying to tackle here. But let's just start with 2021. So what are some of the conditions and factors that have led to such disparity between different peoples access to food and a healthy diet?

Gerda Verburg [00:02:55] Well, it's a complex set of factors, and most of the idea is that food convenience was promoted very much so women shouldn't spend a lot of time in cooking and preparing food, and increasing food waste was also an objective in these times and a lot of other things. So I don't want to blame anyone, but we have missed the opportunity to continue to think about food as something that can fuel the body, but also can nourish the body as well as the brain. And I think there's still a huge misconception, at least with policy advisors and policy decision makers that are around the world. Still, too many people think that if they are able to fill the belly, if they get the calories right, if people

are not hungry anymore, then everything is OK. But this is a huge, huge, huge mistake. Only calories will not do the trick. It is also the quality of the food, the diversity of the food, the minerals to vitamins, etc. that it need to nourish the body, but also the cognitive development and especially during the development of children during the first thousand days. This is of crucial importance because one could say during the first thousand days, the hardware of the physical and cognitive development of children is developed and decided. So if children are not well nourished during the first thousand days, they will be stunted throughout the whole lifespan, meaning that health will be impacted, productivity will be impacted. They will not be able to perform well, complete education and also the productivity that will be hampered. So it's just a standard economy for the next 20 til 50 years, and this is something we need to bring back to people that food is more than calories alone and it's not convenient. But a must to nourish your body and nourish your brain and support society.

Matt Eastland [00:05:07] Thanks Gerda that's super clear and super interesting. And I guess I find it really striking that you talk immediately about policy because I know, of course, as well there's a lot of social factors that contribute to this disparity as well. But I know that obviously talking about policies is probably going to have one of the biggest effects. Lucy, I'm just wondering from your perspective, and what you do it feedback global, do you agree with what Gerda's saying about the focus on quality that we need to have? And is there anything else that we're missing here?

Lucy Antal [00:05:36] Oh yes, I do very much agree with Gerda about quality. But I would also, I'm afraid I might start getting a bit political here. But I do also think that one of the biggest problems we have is that private profit for shareholders has been put ahead of both people and planet when developing our current food system model as it were. So we've looked quite extensively at things like the Just In Time model, and we do like to point out that, you know, food is not a car, it can't be delivered in the same way. And the work that I do on the ground in Merseyside in particular really emphasises to me the issues around the availability of food, the sort of food that is available as well, and the access issues that so many people have in being able to get hold of fresh food. And that comes back then, as Gerda has said, to things like policy and making decisions further up the food chain you can excuse the pun, but of then created the environments in which so many people are frankly existing rather than actually living in. One of the things I say a lot is, you know, if you do not eat well, you will not learn well, if you do not learn while you will not earn well, and this then creates this perpetual cycle of people living in difficult circumstances. And all the talk of levelling up and everything else is all marvellous. But if you don't put the environment there for people to be able to access food in the first place. Talking about levelling up means nothing.

Gerda Verburg [00:07:08] And food needs to be affordable. Lucy, I couldn't agree more with you. It needs to be accessible and affordable. And the craziest thing these days is that healthy food and nutritious food is very often more expensive than the fast food that is spent, sold sugary and it's cheaper, and it provides you with the number of calories you need to keep going. But it doesn't serve your body and your brains.

Lucy Antal [00:07:35] No, not at all. And the other issue, of course, around that is there's quite often a lot of talk about food insecurity, food poverty. In many ways, it's just poverty. You know, the issue is, is that food becomes the moveable budget in the household when people have got less money to play with, and therefore they will go for the cheap, empty calories as it were because they need to fill their tummies. They need to fill their children's tummies. But the thing is, the food that they're being offered in the food that they're able to

access in those spaces is not great. And some of that is down to things like planning. The fact that it costs exactly the same to pay your business taxes if you're selling chips or if you're selling fresh fruit and veg, which of the two are you going to make the most profit on? Well, it's always going to be the chippy, so that's what the business will create, and that's what will we'll spring up in those areas.

Gerda Verburg [00:08:20] Yeah, but here's the good thing, COVID has taught us hard lessons. One is, for instance, that in the humanitarian crisis in many countries, The SUN Movement has now 64 member countries as in who are dealing with wanting to invest in nutrition. And in most of these 64 member countries, you were able to get food and nutrition services as a package in the emergency room of the government. And we were able to convince the government don't only focus on health because in most of our member countries in Latin America, in Africa, in Asia, a day without work, is a day without income and a day without income is compromising your food and nutrition security. So we have convinced them and I think that, that has also supported people, but also action groups like civil society, but sometimes also even producers, especially small and medium sized enterprises and decision makers closer to communities rather than at country level that they need to take care of their people and that food and nutrition services always need to be part of the parcel of any emergency or crisis package. And I think the Food Systems Summit is building on this because I very much embrace the focus on nourishing people, nourishing the planet and creating prosperity. And these three, we are breaking down silos because until now, we have approached them as a silo. One stream or silo was focussing on saving the planet. And very often they were louder than those people who were advocating for saving and investing in humankind in people, but also creating prosperity. Because let's not forget, too many people do not like to leave their communities and their country, but they are just trying to find a better life and future for themselves and their future family. So if we would be able to create better food systems and we focussed much more on nutrition, we understand better nutrition, also decision makers and decision advisors, policy advisors, and we reconnect people with their food - I'm very optimistic that we will be able to feed people well in the near future and that we will reach the nutrition targets and food security targets that are contained in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Matt Eastland [00:10:56] Amazing. Wow, thank you Gerda and thank you Lisa. I knew this was going to be a great discussion, so we haven't even really started yet! So just to kind of take it back to what your body specifically working on. So Lucy, feedback global. You say that our current food system is linear and wasteful, and breaking those patterns could help solve some of the issues we're talking about here. So how could a more sustainable and circular food system help to bring people up to the same level, let's say?

Lucy Antal [00:11:27] Well, I know it sounds really tripe, but we kind of have to go back to basics and look at where our food is coming from in the first place. I mean, we've probably seen during COVID and also more recently, there's been issues with supply chain. There's been issues about when things are arriving or not arriving. And part of this is being driven by the fact that the just in time food model is predicated on the idea that you get permanent deliveries coming in literally every other day, and a lot of the big retail spaces no longer have storage. So because it's all shop front, because the idea is to maximise profits so they don't have the freezer spaces that they used to have. So that means they do need to have constant replenishment of the shelves in order to keep going. And if that breaks down for whatever reason, lorries or there's something happening or as we've seen in the past, there's been an issue around the weather, that's when you get these breakdowns in the chain and because they've also gone for this centralised model, which is where everything goes into a central point and then goes back out again. There was a

great documentary a couple of years ago on BBC Wales. I think it was where a farmer followed one of his potatoes and he followed his potato on this sort of journey. And it went pretty much the entire way round Britain and then ended up being sold literally a mile down the road to where he planted it and you're going 'what!'. So part of what we look at is how we can actually scale things down a bit rather than always this sort of permanent scaling up and looking at how we can make things a bit more human. We can make things perhaps a little less choice, which might not be as popular with the consumer. But at the same time, you also look at some of the supermarkets that have opened up the so-called budget supermarkets. One of the reasons I think that they are so popular is because actually there is less choice so you don't go in there and do the rabbit in the headlights thing of the 403 versions of bread that's in front of you, there are three types of bread, so you know you can choose three. And I think actually dialling down the consumer choice issues, making it easier for local producers, farmers, growers, etc, to be able to get into the supply chain because that's a really difficult thing at the moment. The procurement contracts are huge and are managed in such a way that the smaller guys really don't stand a chance of being able to compete either on price or even just to write the tender in the first place because it's so complex. But also looking again at things like seasonality, reinvigorating the idea of something we've been talking about a lot in the northwest of England is the idea of a Northern menu. So it's maybe looking at what we could have in anchor spaces like hospitals and also schools, et cetera, that, you know, we don't have a lot of beef up here, but we do have a lot of lamb. So maybe we need to eat lamb rather than beef. Do we need to look at having more potatoes rather than pasta because we don't grow wheat up here so we should be looking at, you know, potatoes and barley because we can do different things with that. So it's also about slightly adjusting the way we eat and what our expectations are. And to get out of this idea that we can have everything all the time whenever we want it. We can't, not if we want to keep our planet healthy.

Matt Eastland [00:14:38] Wow ok, thanks Lucy. I totally agree, I mean, when you were talking about choice, I'm always staggered actually, when you go into some supermarket and you've got like a thousand different yoghurts to choose from, and as humans, we're just not able to cope with that kind of choice, I guess. And Gerda is what Lucy's talking about, that idea of of choice or restricting choice and also maybe having more sort of regional approaches to our food consumption. Is that something that you would back?

Gerda Verburg [00:15:05] Yeah, a regional approach is certainly something, I don't like to think in restrictions because people don't like to be restricted. What they would like to be is to be tempted to do the right thing. And for that reason, I think incentivising people and use the carrot and the stick for businesses is much more helpful because I think businesses, they are using a lip service that they want to be part of the solution. But when it comes to really profit making, it's very hard to really be convinced that they are part of the solution. So I think they should be part of the solution. So I am very much in favour of incentivising those companies very often small and medium sized enterprises who are really wanting to be part of the solution because they are part and parcel of their community and they want to serve their country and their society, and to be a little bit tougher to those people who only sell their lobbyists and do the lip service about how they can contribute to better food systems and to better nutrition at a time what they already do. So I'm very critical of them, let them prove that they are working at all and otherwise I don't think we should hesitate with having taxes. Taxes on fat, on sugar, on salt and all other things. But there is one thing I am not in favour of having just taxes because of taxes and to punish enterprises. I would like to use this to improve education and healthy diets, because let's not forget, many people are not aware anymore about how food is produced and how food can

impacts their health, their cognitive development, but also their well-being, and how many depressed people, including young people who we have around the Lower East Side. And sometimes it has to do with the way they are nourishing and treating themselves. So awareness raising about where food is coming from, how does it impact our climate? How can you do better? How can you really become a part of the solution? Because all of us can be part of the solution leading from where we are and this often I still had the conversation about the importance of education here, educate children and they will go home, tell their parents how to behave better and also how to behave more nutritious because they need to be aware about all these kind of things whereby solutions are sometimes very close and even around the corner of their home. The solutions, are not far away but sometimes just around the corner.

Matt Eastland [00:17:57] Gerda I mean everything you say is really, really important but I'm just thinking we've spoken about business and the need to, also to tax. But whose responsibility is it then to kind of tackle these problems? I mean, you say that everyone has to work on this together, but how does that work? Because it's such a big topic and it's such a big challenge. How do we get together and make these things change?

Gerda Verburg [00:18:20] From the SUN Movement perspective, there is only one opportunity, which is governments. And I think civil society and people like me, and Lucy can make a lot of noise, science, but also people who are leading a movement like I do can encourage governments to step up. That's easier said than done because in the western world, for instance, the Nordic world, but maybe also the UK and some other European countries know how we need to deal with the big companies. In other countries, it is quite difficult, but it's a matter of, let's say, human capital development or capability development to make clear where you, as a government stand, and to just spend the years. And to CEO's and I from time to time, I had quite a critical dialogue with CEO's for instance, all the breastmilk substitute products you are marketing breastmilk substitutes where as we all know, breastfeeding is so crucial for children during the first thousand days and they are making the case, but we are doing such great things in other parts of nutrition etc and why do you always come back to this issue? And then I tell them, guys, if you really want to be part of the solution you need to get this elephant out of the room, because if you are not able to behave when it comes to breast milk substitutes and marketing of this, you will never be recognised as real champions of nutrition. So I don't think it's easy. At the same time, we need to be very strong and straightforward with the bigger companies. If you want to become part of the solution and we want to be recognised and you want to get your reputation right and want to get future investments, then you need to improve your behaviour. And that's my final point, more and more also investors and shareholders want companies to become part of the solution when it comes to sustainable energy or when it comes to better food systems and nutrition. Shareholders and investors want to become more and more part of the solution, and we should try to really catalyse this further.

Matt Eastland [00:20:37] Thank you, Gerda and Lucy just listening to what Gerda was saying there. Where do you think from a Feedback Global point of view that we should start in terms of, you know, who's responsible and who needs to do what here?

Lucy Antal [00:20:48] Well, I'll be honest and I'll say that I think actually government needs to be bolder and needs to be tougher and less wishy washy. And oh, well, maybe if you could. What we actually want is we do want some firm legislation. I find it really interesting that I did some work a couple of years back on procurement contracts, looking at food for hospitals, and there was at the time there was also a new government buying

scorecard that had come out, which was full of recommendations about sustainability and how people should be fed and what suppliers should be looking to do. But everything was suggested, not mandatory. And so as a result, that leaves the door wide open for people to do what they like in many ways. And some of the people that we were talking to about the procurement contracts did actually push back to us and say, you know what, if you made it mandatory, then it would be a level playing field for all of us. But until it's mandatory, I'm not going to stick my head above the parapet and say, Oh, we'll do it this way because my rivals will just take over my business and will do it differently to make maximum profit and they will win and I won't. So unless it's level, unless it's made mandatory, things do not change. As Feedback, we've been asking for things like food waste to be measured for years. We've looked at things like measuring food waste from the farm gate because so often about a third of food doesn't even make it out of the farm gate because it's discarded at that point, because it doesn't fit the parameters of, you know, whatever the wholesale market currently wants. All of those things have to be looked at, and it does require governments to be bolder and also to put food far more into the centre of what is life than it currently is. It's kind of on the side. It's oh, it's kind of in health. It's kind of a new environment. It's maybe a bit in tourism, but it's such an essential building block for life that the fact that there isn't at the moment a minister for food that most - this I'm talking about Britain here, obviously - but in most areas, certainly in England you know, you will not find a councillor, a local councillor as part of a local authority who has a portfolio that looks at food, looks at food supply into the city, looks at where people are accessing it. If they're in food insecurity, none of that gets done. And you kind of go, this is just like really basic stuff people, can you please look at what is needed in order to nourish our citizens and turn out people who are going to be able to then contribute properly to the rest of society?

Gerda Verburg [00:23:24] So I do agree for one hundred percent with Lucy. The question is the how? Everyone can do a lot. I've been in politics, but if people are not making noise about the quality of food, about nourishing people, about health, food and affordable and available food, then nothing will happen. I have visited a country where the minister of finance said, Well, why should I invest in nutrition? Nobody's making noise about it. And in those countries where civil society is doing the campaign, the civil society of The SUN Movement with support, sometimes from the United Nations, with my full support and making sure that every candidate Mayor of a community, of a city or a candidate for the parliament or a candidate for the government is requested. And how are you going to take care of people? How are you investing in people? In their nourishment, in their education, in their health system, etc. Can you please make a commitment and then you can see that mountains are moving. But we, as voters, we also need to make the case because if we don't make noise about this, nobody will care because there are other issues where people make much more noise about. Let me give the example once more about the planet. We have Greta Thunberg and I am very proud of her, but she is only focussed on saving the planet. Now, let me tell you this if we don't get Greta Thunbergs and young people who are making the same noise to invest in people, the world, the global society, we will be able to save the planet. If you don't save people, if you don't invest in society and in peoples opportunity, then you will not be able to save the planet, which is making the case, back to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. They are dealing with people and they are dealing with the planet and we as prosperity and future opportunities, they're all interconnected. If you move only one and you leave behind another, you will not reach any sustainable development goal only in conjunction in collaboration without any siloed approach, but with a systemic coherent approach, you will be able to create win win wins for all. And that is the approach that I embrace and that we are sorting out how to do it because that's a systemic change. It's very complex and everybody needs to step out of

his or her comfort zone, but it's the only way forward. I'm a huge believer in it, and I'm optimist.

Matt Eastland [00:26:06] And Gerda, is this like crucial and right at the centre of The SUN Movement's mission? Is this what you're trying to achieve? Investing in a nourishing people?

Gerda Verburg [00:26:14] Investing in a nourishing people, including taking care of the climate and the planet. Because if we fail the planet and our natural resources and our biodiversity, we will never be able to nourish people well, and the same is the other way around. And I think and I agree with Lucy what Lucy has said about this, preventing food losses and waste start at where food is produced and please, please, please invest in starting the food value chain, the processing close to where food is produced. It is making the crazy tour around the world of this one potato from the UK producer. It is ending, cutting out a lot of people who are not adding value to the food but making it only more expensive and they are needed somewhere else. Because still the supermarkets in the UK are empty and transfer to chauffeurs, drivers are very much needed. So let us rethink the way we produce and we use food, and then I think everything is possible.

Matt Eastland [00:27:21] Thanks Gerda. And funnily enough, we actually had WWF on the podcast recently talking about exactly food loss and about the fact that I think they were saying up to 40 percent of all food is actually lost even before it makes it to the retailers, which is really shocking. And given that we're talking about food waste and loss. I suppose the overall cost of feeding the population could be brought down if we tackled food loss and food waste. So how are you both looking to tackle this and Lucy? Maybe we can talk a bit about what Feedback Global are doing in this space.

Lucy Antal [00:27:53] Well, we have done several different things. I run a project in North West England called the Alchemic Kitchen, and we talk about using food as a transformative kind of process to take food that might otherwise be wasted to show people what you could do with it, how you can maintain it. We run workshops. We do activities, we make jams, etc. And then we have a sister project called Sussex Surplus, which has been set up as part of the Flavour Project, which is an EU funded project from back on the days when we could do that, and they are taking things like pumpkins and squashes, because they tend to be and butternut squash particularly, they tend to be discarded. And it's one of the things that the redistribution agencies are forever giving out to communities and communities like we can't deal with the butternut squash anymore. So Sussex Surplus has created a range of soups, and they are working with a range of different people to give them employment, to give them new skills, and also to sort of, you know, perhaps incubate them into other areas where they could run their own food businesses, etc. So trying to keep that kind of circular economy idea going and the same is happening with our Alchemic Kitchen ours is a bit more focussed on mental health and people. But the idea is still the same is that we're using food. We've also done something called The Gleaning Network, which we've been running for several years now, and we've actually now kind of almost outsourced it so that people can go on our website, have a look at The Gleaning Network, set up their own group as they wish to, and then they can get involved with volunteers to go and collect the surplus food on farms. Because once food has been picked, there's invariably food that's left over that isn't required is surplus because, you know, there's been some sort of thing about, Oh, the cauliflower must be 400 grams, and, you know, nature's kind of like, hey, I'm not going that way. I'm going to do 600 grams and 200 grams in which case, well, neither of you going to the market so you're going to sit over there and then we'll probably plough you back under the Earth, but that food could

actually be utilised unused. So those are the kind of things we do. And then we use the kind of work that we do on what you might describe as the grass roots stuff to then go up to the grass tips and say, oi you know, this is what we're doing on the ground and this is what you lot up there, you need to do something about this because we are seeing tremendous amounts of issues and problems that should need to be fixed within our systems. And so that's when our campaign and policy team get involved and then start sort of, you know, really jumping down so we're going to COP26. There's going to be conversations around this. We're also trying to really harness youth as well and get young people involved and articulate about the issues that they are facing and how they being good responsible food citizens is going to help rescue the planet as it were.

Matt Eastland [00:30:44] When do you ever go to sleep Lisa? It sounds like your covering all bases at all times.

Lucy Antal [00:30:49] I have to make this very clear, there is a big team behind me. You know, there's this 20 odd plus of us. You know, I just do my small bit up North. But I mean, we're all very passionate and we all care very much. And the other thing that we're also very interested in is, of course, rights and food rights. And that extends not only to the right to food that everybody should have that right extends to them, that they can have access to good, fresh, nutritious food no matter where they live, what their income level is, etc. But also looking at the people who are producing our food to make sure they are paid properly, to make sure they have proper working conditions, etc. And that side of things mustn't be forgotten.

Gerda Verburg [00:31:27] Yeah. And let me add because I couldn't agree more with Lucy, but focussing on the 64 counties where we are working very often, we see a huge difference between opportunities for men and women.

Lucy Antal [00:31:40] Yeah.

Gerda Verburg [00:31:40] If we would be able to really, not do only the lip service to encourage people or to encourage women to promote women equality, but really make sure that women have the same legal rights, for instance, to own land or to get access to financial service or legal services or whatever that they are more recognised, we could do already a lot more. And bear with me, I mean, women are half of the world and it doesn't make sense anymore to just consider and treat them as second class human beings. It is about time to get this right, and I think COVID has taught us some hard lessons, that equality requires more than lip service. That food security and nutrition security is not a given, but a future objective that can be reached and that we should start at home. And I don't want to put this only on the shoulders of women, because every programme need to be solved by women because women are such good mothers and women are still multitaskers etc. No, I also speak to men and to boys because they need to be good brothers, they need to be good fathers, good uncles, but also who decision making, making sure that women get equality because this is investing also in equality and equality of society for the near future. Equal women who are treated equal in education but also in society are able to create more happy families, escaping poverty and support creating social economic development in a country, and that is what we all need, but just don't put it as an extra on the shoulders of women, but supports their opportunities and give them more space to play their role and to also get a decent position and decent income.

Matt Eastland [00:33:41] And Gerda what sort of interventions have you seen working well from your perspective? You mentioned about making sure that women have equity

here. So is there anything that you've seen that's working particularly well to provide that equity?

Gerda Verburg [00:33:55] Yeah, it is part of our strategy. In nutrition gender equality and youth involvement is a must if they are not at the table, if they're not able to, if they're opinion and to be part of the decision making, we don't consider it. And we have learnt global solutions do not fit any more global solutions and projects like Lucy is talking about can inspire others, but don't come with global solutions. I hear too often people telling, we know all the solutions, we know what needs to happen so give us the money and we will do it. No. Global solutions dropped on counties and dropped on communities do not do the job because they are not owned by people. They are not tailor made to communities. So give people space, be it who produces, be it teachers in education, be it people in the health sector, in the social protection sector, in the water and sanitation sector. Ask them, listen carefully and then support them in finding the solutions that I there to stay, and that can be owned by people because projects and programmes will not make this world a better place anymore. Only if this projects and programmes can inspire others to do the same. But solutions need to be owned by people so they can drive their future prosperity and dignity for themselves.

Matt Eastland [00:35:23] And Lucy I'm just wondering then, so if you have like a solution that works really well regionally and I'm sure you can talk about these a lot. Do you scale them up? Can you transfer them or actually, does it all have to...It just has to work in that region. I'm just trying to work out, how do you pass on best practise, basically?

Lucy Antal [00:35:41] Well, we do it in a number of different ways. So again, I'm lucky that I've got a sort of team in our head office who are really good at writing reports and really good at pulling together information. So there's a whole host of information and examples of everything that we do on our website. Plus, as I say, the reports and campaigns that they get involved with. But what we try to do is we try to pilot solutions in our more regional spaces, see how they work and then if they work, we start scaling up. So I'll give you an example at the moment. Back in April, we started sending a mobile fruit and veg van into an area of Merseyside called Kerby, which has... is pretty much a food desert. There's not a lot going on there, and we asked the community specifically where they would like us to send the fruit and veg van, and they gave us some locations and we did that on a on a Thursday, and it went to three different places. And each time there's like a bulletin has gone out through the medical centre to the patients to say, Hey, you know, the veg bus is going to be in our car park this week, make sure you come down and get your fresh fruit and veg. We are now expanding that into three more spaces in Knowsley because other communities have said we've seen that in Kerby, can we have it in our area? And we thought, well let's see what we can manage and what we are doing is taking this mobile fruit and veg van into spaces where at the moment there is no shop. One of the areas were taking it to next week. We asked people whether they were buying their food, and they said, Well, it's a 20 minute walk to the Iceland supermarket, but I've got a cross, a dual carriageway and I haven't got a car and it's quite heavy carrying stuff back. So we said, well, if we brought the fruit and veg van to your tower block and we parked it up for an hour, would that work? Yeah, we'd love that. And we're already seeing and people always say this thing about, Oh, well, the thing is, people won't, but it's like, yes, people will buy it if it is available and it is easy to access and it is there they will buy it. But if you make it complicated and difficult and you've got to get three buses or you need a car, and invariably this sort of again goes back to the policy things, you know, we're talking estates that were thrown up in the 1970s and 80s when the idea was we would all be Michael J. Fox and in flying cars by this point. So they're kind of estates that lose -

Matt Eastland [00:37:57] - thats such a shame.

Gerda Verburg [00:37:58] Lucy there is one thing I would like to add to your story because these kind of foods also need to be aspirational. So you always need to have champions and role models there who are telling people by social media or television or wherever they are. You need to get fit because this is a real inspiration, this is the right taste, this is what you should. So I don't underestimate that you cannot just tell them that each available the aspirational thing is also something we need to be very keen on.

Lucy Antal [00:38:35] Yes, but I would push back a little bit if I may, purely because what we are doing is we're kind of almost reinstating an old fashioned neighbourhood. And that's something that has disappeared, particularly in a lot of these spaces. So one of the things that I bang on about and you know, my team will like roll their eyes at this point, is I talk about 15 minute neighbourhoods and I talk about this idea that you should be able to, where you are living, you should be able to access a green space, a cultural space, a food space and a health space, all within 15 minutes walk from your home. You should not need to get into a car to get to a library. You should not need to get into a car to buy a pint of milk. And that's what's missing at the moment. And part of the issue is these estates gets thrown up, we're seeing them still going up here in Merseyside on what was green land, on what was a field that building a new estate. And I look at it and I go, where is anyone going shopping? Where is anyone buying the pint of milk from? Because you've not built a shop as part of this estate and as far as I can tell, the nearest shop is like, you know, 5 miles that direction. So everyone's going to get in their car if they have one. And everyone's going to drive to get that pint of milk. It's just creating more and more unsustainable ways of living.

Gerda Verburg [00:39:50] Yeah I agree on this because then it's part of your day to day life it's part of your circle, it's part of your personal and family environment that you know that your fruits are coming from there, etc. Then you get acquainted and you get the narrative behind it because then you are reconnecting people with food, even young people, also young people, and they become aware again of how food is produced. When I was a minister, I had children in primary school because we worked at the time with chefs who were there to work with children in primary school to give taste lessons, to alert children how to taste food. And when they started, they invited the people to sign a contract that they didn't have the guts to taste everything the chef was producing. So they needed to have the guts because very often they say I've never eaten this, I don't like this and then they need to learn, to taste and to learn the value of food and what it can do for you. But at the time, we also had children who really thought that potatoes were growing in a tree, and we had also children who thought that red cows were producing chocolate milk.

Lucy Antal [00:41:12] Yeah.

Gerda Verburg [00:41:12] No it's not, It's not a fairy tale. It's real.

Lucy Antal [00:41:15] I believe it!

Gerda Verburg [00:41:16] And it that tells you that people arent totally reconnected with how their food is produced. And if you know the narrative, if you learn the dedication, the dedication with which your food, whether it's bread for the vegetables, whether it's meat or lambs or whatever, how it is produced with what dedication and what services, etc., you

very much appreciate it and you're also ready to pay a little bit more for it if you can afford it.

Matt Eastland [00:41:47] Can I ask you both? I mean, is there any region or country or area that you are aware of that's doing all of this really well? Is there anywhere that people can look towards to kind of be inspired by? Lucy you've obviously spoken a lot about some of the challenges and solutions in the region. I'm just thinking at a more kind of European or global level, can we look at a particular place and said this government has done x y z. They've put these policies in place, they've worked with local communities and we're getting this impact. Is there anybody out there that we can be researching more and copying?

Lucy Antal [00:42:24] Yeah I could give an example. I was lucky enough to be invited to go and visit Gothenburg in Sweden, and I travelled out with the University of Manchester on the University of Sheffield. And part of that research trip was to go and see how food was supplied into the schools in Gothenburg because they have a blanket policy where it doesn't matter what you earn, who you are. Your child gets fed at school end of.

Matt Eastland [00:42:48] Fabulous.

Lucy Antal [00:42:48] Everybody eats together. Everybody has food. And in order to facilitate that and also to enable for more again circular economy to be able to get food supporting smaller producers. Gothenburg, actually originally, I think, wanted to become London. So they bought up a lot of the, the council bought up a lot of land and then they were like, what are we going to do with this land? And what they ended up doing was they've parcelled it out into small agricultural market gardens. And a Gothenburg resident can apply to take on one of these plots, and they are then charged rent. They're not charged for the first year, but then it's on a sliding scale, depending on the profit that they're making from that particular square of land. But part of the deal is you must then supply your food into an anchor institution, a school hospital, wherever, but also a market that is within Gothenburg. So the food stays within the region and goes into where people are living. And I just thought that was really interesting and I thought it was a great idea.

Matt Eastland [00:43:48] Great. I love that.

Gerda Verburg [00:43:49] Matt thank you for asking this question because I would like to invite people just Google because there is the Milano City project. I think there are many cities where you can be amazed and attracted and you see so many inspiring, inspiring how cities are making themselves nutritious food friendly, but also making strong connections with the producers surrounding these cities. The miracle is happening. For The SUN Movement, we have done too little so far, but we tried to bring, to courage and very often it's their own demand delegations of SUN Movement countries to other counties that are successful and are already done the first steps or are already advanced. Let me give several examples. El Salvador and Costa Rica are working together. They're in the same area, Latin America, and they are inspired by each other. Bangladesh, Cambodia, Senegal, Burkina Faso and the cross inspiration and the cross learning even is amazing. It's amazing and you can write reports, but it's just people meeting people and getting inspired by the examples, but also the lessons learned, both the negative and the positive lessons to get inspired and to do their own thing in their own country.

Matt Eastland [00:45:15] Love it. I love the fact that this is starting to finish on a more positive note, and it always tends to come down to collaboration with these things and I

think that's why I love these discussions. You know, the more people talk about, the more people work together adds to your point Gerda, that's where the magic happens, which is always great. So we are nearly out of time, I'm afraid, and I knew this was going to be an amazing discussion, and it's such a shame that I don't have about two or three hours to talk about this, but I love to wrap up a little bit by asking you both a theoretical question and we do this sometimes on the podcast. But given that this is such an amazing topic, so if you could imagine a utopian food system where you can just rip everything up and start again, what would you do differently to ensure a more equitable access to food for everybody? I know this is... It's big, big, big blue sky thinking. But I wonder, Gerda, could we start with you? What would you do differently if you could start again?

Gerda Verburg [00:46:12] I would make sure that the distinction between how food is produced and how food is consumed as short as possible. And I would like to make sure that the consumers know who is the producer of their food and that all these parts of the value chain are cut out and that are only dealing with trade or subsidies or whatever. And secondly, I would rethink the whole food subsidy part the whole subsidy amount that is about six hundred billion around the world. And I would use it to get the food system right for each and every one.

Matt Eastland [00:46:51] Love it. So reducing the length of the supply chain and making subsidies work harder in the places that are really needed. I think that's great. And what about you, Lucy?

Lucy Antal [00:47:00] I also agree on reducing the supply chain down, but one of the questions I would like to have answered is who owns all the land? And how can we get the land back into the hands of the people and actually make it work for us rather than working for profit and shareholders? Food is an integral part of life, and in some ways, while I appreciate that there needs to be some profit, it doesn't need to be obscene and we need to look at how and where and what is happening with our land and who owns it and what's going on with it and making it easier for normal folk inverted commas to be able to grow and access feed themselves and be able to do that.

Matt Eastland [00:47:40] Thank you, Lucy, I actually feel there's another podcast in there somewhere - who owns all our land? Tune in soon. Wonderful. So I just want to say thank you both for all of your time. Like I say, amazing discussion before we finish, where can listeners go to find out more information about who you are and what you do and potentially get involved Lucy?

Lucy Antal [00:47:59] You can find out information about us feedbackglobal.org. There's information about the project that I run Alchemic Kitchen on there. You'll also find us on Twitter and Instagram and all the usual social media things. But if you start with our website, that will then take you to all the other bit.

Matt Eastland [00:48:17] Brilliant stuff. Thank you very much. And Gerda?

Gerda Verburg [00:48:18] www.sunmovement

Matt Eastland [00:48:24] Fantastic. OK, thank you very much. Like I say, thank you both for your time. Wonderful to have you on the show. And really just to say this has been The Food Fight podcast. And as ever, if you'd like to find out more, head over to the EIT Food website at www.eitfood.eu and please join the conversation via #EITFoodFight on our

Twitter channel @EITFood. And if you haven't already, please hit the follow button so you never miss an episode. Thank you very much.