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Matt Eastland:

Welcome back to the Food Fight Podcast. I'm Matt Eastland. COP 28, the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference kicks off on November the 30th. In preparation, here on the podcast, we're releasing a series of mini episodes celebrating the work of some of the most innovative, food-focused companies and organizations featured at the conference.

Glendys Virginia Luciano:

Hi, I'm Glendys Virginia Luciano, and I'm the Strategic Network Engagement Manager at the Young Professionals for Agricultural Development, Y-PART. On the build-up to COVID-28, I want to talk to you about the role that young professionals play in building healthy and equitable food systems. The Young Professionals of Agricultural Development, Y-PART, we are a young professionals organization that is for youth, led by youth. And our goal is really to ensure that there is a platform available for young professionals that are interested in food systems to network, to have a space where they can do policy work and elevate their voices, where they can learn, have more information, whether that's through our capacity building programs. We try to acquire funding to be able to get that at the grassroots level. And so our goal is really to try to scale up those ideas, those innovations. That's really a lot of what we do. We do have a special focus on the Global South. That's where most of our members are based. Global action is important, but it's not possible without local action. And so we really want to elevate the ideas that young people have. It's not about imposing what we think or what we believe because we work at the global level, but to really push that forward. If we don't educate and upskill our youth, we're just going to see the continuous exacerbation of the climate crisis and injustices around the world as well. We know already that people in vulnerable situations, which include young people, women, small-scale farmers. Indigenous peoples are already at the forefront of the effects of the climate crisis. And so not giving people the tools will just further exacerbate the injustice in general. But I would take it also a bit further than that, because the reality is that when you go into these communities, you do realize that they do have an understanding of what's happening and they have knowledge already. It's just a matter of not maybe having the words to be able to go into these spaces and be able to explain what's happening. And so I love, for example, the work that the Global Youth of Biodiversity Network, GIBN, they have this amazing policy brief on transformative education, because in reality, it's not a lack of education that we have. It's a lack of proper education. And what they're really pushing forth there or towards in terms of those discussions that are happening at the Biodiversity Culp is that we need tools to be able to have an understanding of the environmental crisis so that people can actually live in harmony with nature, have decent lives, decent livelihoods, and that this education has to go not just, the education has to go a bit further than the formal education system. It has to be both formal and non-formal for people of all ages. We often do hear an emphasis of youth because, of

course, we are the next generation that will be, you know, taking positions of leadership. I always say, well, that's not only the case. We are already leaders of today. But then I also take it a step forward. We don't want it to be an issue just of young people. This is an issue that's for everyone. Humans, we always need to be on the journey of continuous learning. So providing the right tools, education throughout our lives, whether that's formal or informal forms of education, are crucial if we are serious of continuously tackling the issues that will come in the climate space and also in the food system space as well. Why part we would be considered newbies when it comes to Culp? We attended our first Culp in Glasgow in Culp 26. It was also kind of like one of the first Culp that started to slowly mention food and slowly want to bring food to the agenda. Then we fast forward to Culp 27 and there were, I believe, like five different food pavilions. And you started to see all of a sudden so many conversations around food. But we wanted to take it a step further. And so Yport this year is co-leading the youth co-host for the Food Systems Pavilion, along with 12 other youth-led organizations from across the world. And there we're really putting forth side events, but also taking part in the policy and the messaging. Over more than that, as well, we are also part of the Food for Climate Pavilion, where we're helping to organize the Youth Day there as well, as well as we're following closely the SSJW negotiations and discussions. Hopefully this year we're going to see the outcomes that we wish to see. When it comes to COPE, of course, stronger partnerships. And what exactly will that mean? More ambitious discussions around not just the climate negotiations, but how can we get agri-food and food systems in general involved in climate finance? And how can we increase the quantity and the quality of finance? And one of the initiatives that actually came out of COP 27 was the FAST initiative. And so the goal this year is to also launch this FAST partnership in which Y-PART will be one of the youth organizations involved in this initiative. We really want to see these conversations be pushed forth and that they don't only stay around COPE or just preparation around COPE, but that we're able to continue the momentum into the next year as well. Consumers are asking for more, right? They want more ethical and ambitious, let's say, legislations in place or practices in place. And so having young professionals that are not only trained to do the job that they're there for in the technical expertise aspects, but also have an understanding of the wider scope and the role that they play, only through having this upcoming generation have those skills, will we be able to see a transformative change? And so on top of that, we do see it as like an opportunity for intergenerational dialogue within the food industry. You know, I see this also in when I have conversations and I get asked by senior experts, well, what do you think about this, right? It's already, you see that there is a shift already and that us knowing and having an awareness of how things work, but also a vision of where we want to be, will only make things better and transform the food industry, policies, economics and whatnot. So I would see that as a concrete benefit. If I could send one message to the food industry, it would be to be part of the positive change, to be part of the just food systems transformation. You have a very big responsibility and

dismantling inequality when it comes to food systems. Don't take that responsibility lightly. This has been the Food Fight podcast. As ever, if you'd like to find out more about what we do, head over to the EIT Food website at www.eitfood.eu. Also, please join the conversation via the hashtag EIT Food Fight on our X channel at EIT Food. And if you haven't already, please hit the subscribe button so you never miss an episode.