

# S1 Ep.12: Socio-economic justice - how scholarships are changing the way we're changing the world

[00:00:00] **Fergus Turner** : [00:00:00] Welcome to the, just for a change podcast, powered by the Bertha Center for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship. First off, what you need to know about us is that thinking differently and innovatively about big social issues is what makes us tick. We love offering new perspectives on social innovation and social justice.

[00:00:19] So we hope you'll be inspired to make a difference wherever you are. We're changing the way we're changing the world. Welcome to the, just for a change podcast with me, your host Fergus Turner, a Bertha alumni student. I have been working with the Bertha center's youth development, innovation portfolio, as well as the Social Systems, Justice and Innovation portfolio.

[00:00:43] Established in 2011 in partnership with the Bertha Foundation as a specialized center at the UCT Graduate School of Business, the Bertha center works with inspiring leaders who are catalysts for social and economic change and human rights. [00:01:00] The center's mission is to pursue social impact towards social justice in Africa, through teaching knowledge, building convening and catalytic projects with a systems lens on social innovation.

[00:01:12] The first academic center in Africa dedicated to advancing social innovation and entrepreneurship. The Bertha Center in collaboration with the GSB has integrated social innovation into the business school curriculum established a wide community of practitioners and awarded scholarships on MBA MPhil and PhD programs to more than 91 students from 16 African countries of the past 10 years.

[00:01:39] So why handout scholarships? Well, the main motivation for us to award these scholarships is that we can bring together out of the box thinkers, social activists, and systems and shopping ears. It's no secret that many of the big systems are crumbling. We want to nurture a new generation of social innovators and promote [00:02:00] entrepreneurial solutions to help solve some of the most urgent, social and environmental problems of our time.

[00:02:07] On today's slightly different. Just for a change episode, we are welcoming three of our current scholarship students, Shannon van Wyk, and Sampson Adotey all obviously have a strong social innovation leaning. Shannon Sampson, thank you for being here with us today. It's always a privilege to share conversation and insights with you.

[00:02:32] And, uh, now for the first time in person in a very long time. Um, so if you could just share a little more about how you've come to be here, Shannon. Um, what influences your work, uh, what keeps you thinking and dreaming about a new world? Um, and we'll hand over. To Sampson later.

[00:02:52] **Shannon van Wyk**: [00:02:52] Cool. Thanks, vagus. Um, yeah. How did I get here? So I am a digital strategist, [00:03:00] um, by craft. I started off in advertising, um, and I was definitely experiencing a bit of an existential crisis. Before I applied, um, to the GSB, um, and

then to the, um, for the Bertha scholarship as well. Um, and essentially I knew that like I had like the skillful communication, but I knew it wasn't being used in the correct space.

[00:03:22] Um, and then I applied to the MPhil and I feel like, um, it answered a lot of the questions I had, but it also opened up this completely new community to me. Um, and just like consequent to that. Um, I left my job in advertising. I moved into the social impact space. I moved back to Cape town because I'm from Cape Town and I'm very interested in, um, community mobilization and resource mobilization.

[00:03:46] And I felt like I needed to come home to do that work. So currently, um, I am the digital portfolio manager at Afro Barometer. We conduct, um, surveys in public perceptions around democracy and governance across the continent. [00:04:00] Um, but I'm also interested in like the communities that particularly my family comes from the communities, um, surrounding Cape Town that are affected by spatial Apartheid.

[00:04:12] Um, and I just want to understand. Stand like there's so many voices. Um, I want to understand how we can better amplify those voices. And for me, I think digital is just an incredible tool to do that. Like I grew up on the internet. I know that there's more uses, um, than selling things to people like through Facebook.

[00:04:31] And I want to figure out like, how do we implement that properly. And then my master's research in the MPhil. Well is, um, focusing on digital democracy. So how do we take tools and platforms and extend democratic processes so that they can be more accessible and more inclusive? So like right now I'm looking at public participation, but I mean, I think like this is something that goes throughout the entire system.

[00:04:55] Um, and yeah, it's just about like poking and prodding and being like, how do we change things now?

[00:05:00] [00:05:00] **Fergus Turner** : [00:05:00] Certainly. And, you know, referencing that, that, um, motivation to step into both the Bertha scholarship space and the MPhil. Um, it often seems to be somewhat of a personal and professional crisis or a questioning that, that launches us into that.

[00:05:18] So speaking of democracy and, um, sort of bringing more people into democratic processes, Sampson, if you could share with us, um, uh, newest, uh, part of the newest cohort of. Scholarship cohort is part of the program. Um, how you've come to be here and a little bit about your background and interests.

[00:05:36] **Sampson Adotey**: [00:05:36] Thanks Fergus. Um, and it's a privilege to be here. And I must say that I count myself as one of those lucky people who got accepted into the CS cohorts, um, bearing all the current pandemonium and the economy and whatever it is in the world, the states of the world today. My journey is quite an interesting one. And [00:06:00] when I graduated from my undergraduate degree in 2016, um, I got a scholarship to go into an MBA program.

[00:06:07] One month down the line I dropped out of it, uh, because I felt I wasn't prepared for that program. So then I went, uh, on what to work and I had an opportunity to work across multiple sectors from what to, in sanitation, to education, to the health care. And the development sector and having worked in different roles and having experienced

communities across Sub-Saharan Africa and being involved in indigenous development, I felt I needed a program that would allow me to think about innovation in a very inclusive way.

[00:06:43] Um, especially, um, because at that point I was working. As a policy and communication specialist in a foresight organization. And part of the work I was doing was developing a roadmap for the digital economy of Africa together with the African Union. [00:07:00] And so having transitioned from that role into, um, a different role in the mission organization of that organization, which is the African Institute of Mathematics and Sciences. Um, I feel that I needed some full of edge above my colleagues and also some form of training to be, to become better at what I do. Hence I challenged on, uh, the program on Facebook strangely. Um, and I was one, one time I was browsing on the internet and having a chat with a friend and I was like, ah, uh, just looking across, you know, scrolling up.

[00:07:40] And then I saw the, the ad, um, applied and at first, I thought. I probably might not get in because I looked at the previous cohorts and like the experience, the worlds of experience and all of that. But then when I got your message, I was really excited, [00:08:00] um, after that, um, whole admission process. So I think for me, what actually drives me and the core focus of my research and having, you know, to study at, um, within the center, um, is.

[00:08:16] I really want to understand how do we, how do we leverage advanced technology, education, technology, for instance, to prepare young people for the future of work, because there's this whole conversation about the fourth industrial revolution, what we need to do all these fanciful, you know, and emerging technologies, uh, biotechnology, Bitcoin, whatever cryptocurrency, artificial intelligence, and all of that.

[00:08:42] But we have over 125 million young people who do not have access to laptops in Africa. Right. So how do you expect this population to actually be skilled enough to be by take us and create us within that digital [00:09:00] economy and to be part of the fourth industrial revolution? So that's what my research is about.

[00:09:04] I really want to understand. How can we in an innovative and inclusive manner solve this problem? Because to be honest, it's a grand challenge. And if care is not taken, it's going to be a grand challenge for several decades and you and I would have kids and our kids would grow up to be doctors or whatever it is, and it will still be a problem.

[00:09:25] **Fergus Turner** : [00:09:25] Yeah. So for both of you, your research interests intersect social innovation and very difficult and often politicized, uh, complex systems. Uh, when you talk about democracy and inclusion of new groups of young people in democratic practice, or when you talk about the realities of transitioning, uh, this continent's economies to the next iteration of what work looks like in the future.

[00:09:58] Um, these are difficult and [00:10:00] complex issues. And often when we speak about social innovation and systems change, it is easy to gloss over the difficult questions and realities. That has everything to do with the change we seek to make. So I'd like to dig a little bit more into those inconvenient truths that you may be experiencing in your research, in your work, um, connected to political economy, democracy and social cohesion.

[00:10:24] **Shannon van Wyk**: [00:10:24] So I guess like overarchingly, as you were speaking, the one thing that I was kind of like thinking about in terms of inconvenient truths,

particularly around social innovation, um, Like the thing that comes to mind for me is this question of like, are we willing to let go of how we benefit from the status quo?

[00:10:45] And that's like the overarching thing for me, because like, as I've gotten into my research at first, I was kind of like, this is the problem, or this is the expression of the problem. And like, how do we fix that? And like, obviously the MPhil is about like systems. I mean the entire like [00:11:00] Bertha centers, like based on like systems thinking.

[00:11:03] Um, and then I was like, okay, cool. Flip it around. And it's like, these are the structures that we need to change. And it's not even just about changing those structures. Then it's about the individual within those structures and how they're willing to like, let go of power. If they're willing to let go of power.

[00:11:19] Um, and that's kind of the point that I'm at now, and I'm not going to pretend like I have an answer cause I definitely don't and I'm pretty sure if I get a little bit more into my research, I'll have some understanding of how we move through that. Um, but I currently just have this understanding that, well, my main thing is that there needs to be like this ego death, um, in terms of allowing us to like get to this point of social innovation.

[00:11:43] **Sampson Adotey:** [00:11:43] Yeah. And I, and T to add to what you're saying, when I think about ego death, I also think about, um, it beyond, you know, um, politics, um, especially talk about industry, talk about, you know, the [00:12:00] different structures. You, you talk about traditional leadership because there's like politics there's a political class.

[00:12:06] And there's traditional the traditional class, like in our African societies, typically you'd find that villages are governed by either chiefs or Kings or Queens. And often, you know, that institution, that traditional governance institution is not in tandem with existing political structures. So you'd find that few countries across Africa.

[00:12:31] Have that, you know, um, symbiotic relationship, um, in terms of these two structures, but some don't have at all. So, um, it then becomes very difficult. So I'll give you an example in Ghana, where I come from. Um, if the politician during the election period, you know, when politicians want a campaign, they go to see the chiefs and the kings, um, for approval and what, or whatever it is after that happens. And when the, when [00:13:00] nobody comes back to the chief, Right. And there's this power play because there's, I am the elected representative. Obviously I control the resources of the state. Um, the chief is back, well, the lands are vested in my hands, so you can't do any development, whatever, without my permission.

[00:13:18] Right. And so there's that battle. So then you'd find that the people who suffer that. Who suffer or who, whoever the casualties, um, of this battle. It's, uh, the, the people, you know, the normal person who has no political power who has no traditional power and who's literally like going to farm to feed his children.

[00:13:38] And that becomes a big challenge. And we need to really think around how to disrupt that sort of challenge that exists currently. I mean, the fact that these guys are consistently and continuously on each other's strengths, um, for this scarce resources available. And you'd often find that people even [00:14:00] encroach on government lands, um, and even on traditional lands, which, which in any case could be very.

[00:14:07] I mean the subject of land or the topic of land is a very important thing because, you know, land rights gives people power because if I sell my land to you, I get money, right. And that money could help me take care of my family. But if you take away my land, how do I, you know, so the land in the first place, I don't have any money to pay for my kid's tuition and whatnot.

[00:14:30] So then the number of interesting examples that I really want to talk about, but I'm also mindful of the fact that beyond, you know, the complex and complicated structures that we have. And I think Shannon did talk about like behavioral change and, and how that is important. Um, often politicians shy away from the fact that, um, behavioral change takes time.

[00:14:54] You know, people are interested in just splashing money at anything. So you'd find a lot of, [00:15:00] one of the things I love to do, uh, for fun is just visiting, like all these aid organizations, websites and looking at the tenders. And in Malawi, for instance, you'd find the European Union has all these code for like tenders and all of that.

[00:15:15] And you look at the descriptions and it's like, flyers banners. What not fliers and banners wouldn't solve the behavioral crisis we have on this continent, you know, so we can print as many flyers and banners as much as we want, but if we are not strategic and intentional about behavioral communication, we're going to have a big issue and we might not get the Africa we all dream and want, I mean, 10 years down the line.

[00:15:43] **Fergus Turner** : [00:15:43] So you speak about strategic and intentional. Linking that to a sort of patterns. So the virtue of patterns, especially in political change. So bringing those same virtues and those same notes, Sampson into this discussion [00:16:00] of as social innovators and as people interested in social innovation and systems change, um, what are examples or at least ways of thinking about how to be pattern, how to, um, look more clearly at what is strategic and intentional disruption.

[00:16:20] **Sampson Adotey**: [00:16:20] Um, one thing that always makes me, um, worried is when people in the development sector go into communities and think that communities have no knowledge or clue about what they're doing, right. You're coming into my community to tell me that, well, the way you do things, doesn't work and it's not the right way.

[00:16:46] And I'm going to teach you how to do it, you know, and often what they realize, or these guys find out after years of pumping money into countless projects, is that the [00:17:00] solutions that they present are not viable? They don't last they're unsustainable. And when they leave these guys, I thought to, you know, whatever they were doing before.

[00:17:10] So in the light of patterns and intentionality, um, one of the things that I can suggest or propose is having to, I can acknowledge that role and importance of indigenous knowledge and indigenous knowledge systems. Um, when we want to. Um, plug, you know, our computer to, to charge it. Right. We don't just go and look for the sun and just plug the whole thing into the sun.

[00:17:42] No, we look for a socket. If there's no sockets, we have to look for an extension. And then we connect that extension to a socket before we plug our charger. So if you're coming to my community as human, the source, then it's the indigenous knowledge and

indigenous knowledge [00:18:00] systems. The next point of connection is if I can find that if I come with a solution, which is to connect my solution to the existing systems and I can't find a place to plug it.

[00:18:14] Where do you go? You follow the community entry process. Um, and often people neglect that people go into communities and they are like, oh, you guys, I just noticed you don't have a market, you don't have a hospital, you don't have this. Okay. I'm going to build you this. I'm going to do that. Um, and then you realize that.

[00:18:31] That is not a primary need of a community. You know, you'd find, I have had found myself in a situation where I spent about seven weeks in a very rural and remote. And remote's coming in with, without electricity, without, um, telephone network or whatsoever it is. And, well, you know, I was conducting research and I really wanted to understand the problems and the priorities of the people in our community.

[00:18:59] I was shocked, [00:19:00] uh, you know, having stayed there for seven weeks and thinking that, oh, they need a clinic, they need this, they need that. I was shocked to find out, um, during one of the community gatherings, what they felt was the urgent most urgent need. And I realized that. If I'd listened much more intentionally and, and, and I'd engaged people with a very open mind, you know, I could have done better.

[00:19:25] And luckily for me, that was my first year. So in my second year, my approach changed. And to be very honest with you, by the second year, the third week of my seven weeks day, that community got electricity, right. Because when I came to that realization and I was exited. I made it, my friends, my colleagues, and I admitted a point of interest to start finding ways that we could actually get electricity into that community.

[00:19:55] And hence when we did that, you know, the other needs that [00:20:00] were, you know, and, and, and, and whatever, all that is, you know, followed after. And so I think we need to start thinking around these lines, like, Valuing indigenous knowledge and indigenous knowledge systems.

[00:20:14] **Shannon van Wyk:** [00:20:14] For me, I feel like kind of the pathway to that is this understanding of like how systems need to be more reflexive. So I think to preface that. We as a society, we have an obligation with like precedent setting and then doing things based on like that precedent that's been set. Um, and I think that's the disconnect that you speak about in terms of like government, um, and like community leaders, because I think the community leaders need to be reflective to be responsive to the needs of communities.

[00:20:42] But I think government is allowed to be like, this is the playbook, this is the bureaucracy. We do things like this. You know, this is how it's always been done. Um, So that's the big challenge for me. It's like, how do you take these systems and how do you ensure that they are reflexive, and there's like a level of introspection [00:21:00] that happens there, um, both in terms of an organization and like in like a personal, um, kind of like up.

[00:21:08] **Fergus Turner :** [00:21:08] Yeah. So, you know, what I'm hearing sort of from you, Shannon is recognizing this balance. Of the sort of playbook of institutional ways of dealing with complexity, compressing uncertainty. That's what bureaucracy does. Um, to some

extent and sort of recognizing that there's virtue in finding that balance and perhaps not, um, polarizing, uh, sort of grounded.

[00:21:37] Indigenous or community knowledge, layers of knowledge that are linked to real experience and the layer of the political, the layer of the bureaucratic political class. Right. And so I, so, so seeing those, the, that sort of similar signal from both of your experiences, I want to sort of sort of unpack the [00:22:00] next layer, which is how does the there's a political consciousness or a political, um, understanding and the way that you share your experience, how might we bring that recognition of political realities often unseen, um, into the way that we practice social innovation and systems change, again, pointing to any examples or key questions that sit with you?

[00:22:27] **Shannon van Wyk:** [00:22:27] Yeah. I mean, I feel like something you really touched on that, um, This idea of not parachuting people into communities and being like we're going to fix your problems. Um, in my personal experience, I think like that's something that I've had to reckon with since moving back to Cape Town. So I am, you guys can't see me, but I'm colored from Cape town.

[00:22:47] Um, my family comes from, um, District Six or what was previously known as District Six. Um, and Mitchell's plain. So there's this great kind of like desire for me to take this indigenous knowledge that I have and [00:23:00] put bring it back into the community and be like, I'm here to help you guys. Um, and I lived in Joburg for like four years.

[00:23:06] Um, so there was this kind of longing to be back in Cape Town and to be within my community. But I'm also very aware of the fact that as much as I am a marginalized in certain ways, I'm very privileged in certain ways. Um, and it's not my position to come into those communities that I feel like on mine.

[00:23:24] Um, and to kind of like. Yeah, do this thing where I'm like, this is what we need to fix. This is how we need to go about it. Um, so I think for me, a big thing is like, What are the platforms that we create, um, and what are the platforms that we can create for other people? That's kind of like a big area, um, of what I think my research or what I would like my research to focus on.

[00:23:48] Um, and how do we understand what communities already have, what the strengths are, who the people, all that they listen to, and then how do we just like, kind of mobilize that for the greater good.

[00:24:00] [00:24:00] **Fergus Turner :** [00:24:00] So talking about humility, talking about sort of platforms as a type of, you know, prioritizing inclusivity, prioritizing access, enabling others to, um, to be a part of a future that has an implication on politics and power. And in many ways, um, could come up to confrontation with the kind of ego, if you will, of the present day power structures, institutions. And so again, I'm going to press a little hard and say, um, what do we do? What do we do as social innovators, as entrepreneurs who are hoping for a new future finding market or non-market solutions to social and environmental challenges? What do we do when we come across? Um, that, that encounter with a political reality that does not, um, suit inclusive platforms and accessibility for all.

[00:25:00] [00:25:00] **Sampson Adotey:** [00:25:00] The answer is very simple. Um, Let us not lean away from participatory approaches. It's as simple as that, I mean, top down, hasn't



worked for us and we've, we've studied this in school. We've read a theories and all of that, and we've just seen it doesn't work. I mean, when you have a very centralized system, which eliminates parBcipaBon at the grassroots level, It doesn't make it work. I mean, a good example. Kenya had to move into a devolved, uh, or a devoluBon in recent Bmes because they realized that look, if we want to really get ourselves at par across counBes, we need to do things differently, you know?

[00:25:47] And they are currently in the consBtuBonal review process. I mean, a number of other countries have realized this and I gradually shi`ed and empowering, you know, there are various districts, uh, [00:26:00] what the call in Ghana, for instance, the Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies, and trying to find, uh, give them more funds, trying to give them the leeway to actually drive development and growth at the grassroots level.

[00:26:14] So we cannot conBnue to do things as we've done in the past. It's as simple as that, um, we need to start leaning towards co-creaBon. Um, when it comes to problem solving, we need to start, um, lean towards, you know, parBcipatory approaches and not just for the fact that the donors are going to give us money for that, but we need to actually have that in our DNA, like invite this and we, we should be sleeping and dreaming, you know, parBcipatory approaches, I enBre lives.

[00:26:44] And maybe when. 10, 20 years, 30 years down the line and you are pulling comes up. We might, you know.

[00:26:51] **Fergus Turner** : [00:26:51] So Sampson it sounds that, I mean, there's an emphasis on poliBcal systems moving towards decentralizaBon, [00:27:00] right. Which is the devoluBon of power, uh, in order to cope with emerging trends and pa^erns in society and in the global economy, Kenya is a case in point.

[00:27:13] Um, however, when it comes to. Uh, taking that parBcipatory approach when it comes to, uh, let's innovate with a de-centralizaBon priority and with a deep, intenBonal listening, um, when we confront the hegemony, then trenced insBtuBonality of the way that things have been done before, whether it's in the aids sort of space, whether it's in the development sector, whether it's in the poliBcal sector, um, How do we, how do we maintain a resilience as innovators? How do we not, as you say, lean back, out and acquiesce to, uh, previous insBtuBons and the sway of power. Shannon, do you have anything to share?

[00:28:00] [00:27:59] **Shannon van Wyk**: [00:27:59] Yeah. Um, definitely. I feel like this is kind of, it's so interesBng how all MPhils reach the same like point, um, Yeah, but I think like my addiBon to that is like, let's look at the system of representaBve democracy and I completely agree with you.

[00:28:16] I think we need to move to a place where we are encouraging parBcipaBon more. And I think that currently representaBve democracy is on set up for that. Um, so I think we have this understanding that like within this type of setup, the person who you've elected to represent, you will now go and take your issues into like policymaking spaces, but we understand that there's no deliberaBon that happens within representaBve democracies. And most of the Bme, the people who are represenBng us, other poliBcal and economic elites. You know, there's this word counselor syndrome where, I mean, you, you spoke about it.



[00:28:48] You come in, you address the community, you do the checkbox things so that people will vote for you. And then you leave and you're like hardly ever there again. Um, and in my own province, We were sinng, [00:29:00] it's like, uh, this is a really big issue. Um, so yeah, like, I guess my contribuBon is to, to that, does that like an, all of this, I always go to like the high up stuff, but we have to like throw the system out.

[00:29:12] We have to create spaces for deliberaBon. Um, and I feel like. We need to also like ensure that parBcipaBon is intenBonal, because I think we can also point to the way that we parBcipate. Now, we can be like, we've got a pug parBcipaBon, um, set up it's it works. But we also know that like, There's so many layers.

[00:29:34] There's so much cherry picking that happens within that, that at the end of the day, um, communiBes aren't feeling the impact of that. Um, and then another thing I think for me is like, evidence-based policymaking. So it is like when you go back into communiBes, are you actually listening to them? How are you taking through those kinds of like, issues that they're speaking about?

[00:29:53] What's the feedback loop so that there's some accountability to the systems as well. Um, but generally I feel like my takeout is at the end of [00:30:00] the day, like disrupt the status quo. And I mean, you speak about like how o`en, how much Bme do we have. I don't even think it's like a ma^er of like how much Bme does the system have.

[00:30:09] I think the people are mobilizing and they are going to force the system to change. And I think like for me, that's the cool thing about like social media and like social media advocacy and movements that are like born within social media, because it's literally like the internet and I mean, Yeah, the internet can be used for whatever your intenBons are.

[00:30:28] Um, but when it comes down to that, if you're like, I want to mobilize, I want to organize, you can do it on these, in these plaLorms now. So it's going to get to a point where the status quo will. It's not a ma^er of like how like, like, can these systems maintain the status quo? It's just going to be like, things will have to change because there's this external pressure.

[00:30:50] **Sampson Adotey:** [00:30:50] Are we headed? I want to ask a quesBon. So. Do do we think we are heading towards like a reset, um, or a reset of [00:31:00] perhaps all the systems that we can think about, um, especially looking at the past one year and how COVID has, you know, sort of influenced, um, a lot of changes to some extent, I mean, changes in the educaBonal sector changes even in governance, some countries had elecBons and they had to re strategize around, like even allowing observer groups into the countries.

[00:31:26] You, I couldn't give you an example in Burundi. We also, what happened when, when the government issued a statement and said, we aren't taking a new one, we aren't lengng any observers into our country, except if you're in Burundi or you're in the east African communiBes or something of that sort.

[00:31:46] Um, we've seen the same in my country where. Uh, suddenly, their rules were relaxed when we get into towards elecBons and people could, you know, congregate in large numbers. Um, and right a`er that, we saw [00:32:00] another wave and people were now criBcizing government for whatever it is like, but you guys are the fault.

[00:32:07] It's your fault. We were having these numbers and all and WhatsApp, whatever it is. So I'm just thinking like, I, we get into, it's a reset.

[00:32:16] **Fergus Turner** : [00:32:16] I sincerely hope we aren't. And the point that I will make is reset. Revolution, uh, any of those words, any of those transition words imply a shock, a type of shock, a suddenness. And we know from the tales of history that sudden change where the by war revolution, uprising crisis, natural disaster often leaves the collective traumatized. And we end up in fight or flight perpetually and recreating, uh, the institutions that help us feel safe and [00:33:00] secure and protected from that ego. And really literally from that, from that self that is not necessarily as Sampson is talking about dreaming into the future. And so what I would pose is to say, we talk about co-creation and how sort of answer my own question here. How can we entertain lens where not only am I co-creating with someone like you, Shannon, or someone like use Samsung where there's a shared dream and a shared drive and a shared sort of a, you could even say ideological position, but how can we start to appreciate the role of co-creating with. Uh, that with which we are contending and confronting. And I'd like to invite us all, perhaps just to, uh, measure a final response to, to the sort of what now with [00:34:00] uh, and, and, and where to next, as we start to conclude this conversation.

[00:34:04] **Shannon van Wyk**: [00:34:04] I guess my addition to this question of like, are we heading toward a reset or at least what I feel like I've seen is that, um, the world is getting smaller and we have access to more things. And I like that you said, um, this idea of like dreaming into the future. Um, and I also think that like, we, my generation, your generation, we're a generation of people who are a lot more introspective. So for me, it all comes back to like, here, like. Like, what are the things we're willing to let go of personally? And then how does that like translate to a broader community?

[00:34:37] **Sampson Adotey**: [00:34:37] Yeah. Yeah. And also talking about dreams. Um, you know, I want to think what is the African dream. Right. There's a lot of conversation about the Africa we want, but what is the African dream? Are we, co-creating a dream that we can all buy into and work towards or are we saying there's [00:35:00] agenda 2063. So to hell with any dream that doesn't align with agenda 2063?

[00:35:07] **Fergus Turner** : [00:35:07] Yeah. And recognizing that those kind of, uh, macro global, um, pictures are, again a reflection of where we're coming from and not where we're going to. So, you know, we talk about the abstractions of the political, and then the level of community and of participation. Um, But what about when it comes down to ourselves as individuals, as people working in sometimes very difficult sectors that suffer from the same symptoms that they're trying to change in the world, uh, how do we survive? How do we as social innovators, as scholars, as people working in the field, survive the twists and turns of very difficult realities.

[00:35:56] **Sampson Adotey**: [00:35:56] Okay. So for me, um, I think what has [00:36:00] worked is finding the balance between being on the field and off the field, um, in the sense that when I spend a lot of time, you know, in the office trying to just do office work, I get bored. I get bent out. You know, I'm always yet into go out into the field to speak to people, to interview people, to work with people, to design solutions for people.

[00:36:27] And for them, me, anytime I find myself in the process of getting bent out. I always look for an escape. Um, and the escape is going into like a community to derive

inspiration and often not just going into the community, but actually speaking to people and listening to stories because trust me when you're on your bed at night and you're tired, you're stressed, you're burnt out, probably depressed.

[00:36:52] And you remember some of these stories and the reason why you need to wake up the next morning, get dressed and [00:37:00] show up for that young guy. Who has this dream of becoming an aerospace engineer. You actually get out of that, um, feeling.

[00:37:10] **Shannon van Wyk:** [00:37:10] I'm not even going to pretend like I have an answer to that question. Um, I think my path is a bit different. I think I started off in a very like commercial space, like working in commercial advertising and I've always felt like, even before I started working, when I was in university, like social issues and social sciences spoke to me that there is this understanding of like this burnout and that's why I didn't get into it.

[00:37:32] Like, that's why I was like, let me just go and take care of myself, like being very liberal individualist and like, I'm fine. Everything else will be fine. And then that wasn't fulfilling for me. So now I just have to try this out because I guess I've got to figure out like what this is. Um, so I think I've got like this still very theoretical understanding theoretical application. I think there's even like a level of disconnect between the fact that I'm a digital portfolio manager means that there is like, there's some [00:38:00] screens in between me and the people that we do the research with is like it's a bit sanitized. Um, so yeah, like. I'm still figuring that out. I don't have the answers just yet, but it definitely was like a big thing that I thought about. And the reason why I was like, I'm not going to get into this space. Um, but then I think it comes back to like personal sacrifice. I've seen the rosy side where you can like make.

[00:38:21] Like lots of money and live a comfortable life and not be like burnt out by issues that aren't necessarily yours. And I think it's a personal feeling that, that doesn't speak to me and I'm going to try out this space, um, and I'm going to try and like navigate it with intentionality, but I also think having a specific time period for things is important.

[00:38:39] **Fergus Turner :** [00:38:39] Yeah. So, uh, with that, um, I'd like to thank you for a. Uh, I mean, Shannon, you, you hit the nail on the head. It seems as if all scholars kind of get here. This is, this is why we come in where we're asking, we're asking questions, not just of the world of our work, but of ourselves principally [00:39:00] and how that links to our professional and personal journeys have everything to do with what the scholarship with the birth of scholarship is all about since inception.

[00:39:08] And I want to sort of, um, close things off was really, uh, um, Is this a simple reflection, uh, for those who might be listening and might be interested in finding more about the scholarship program, perhaps getting involved in the Bertha center or the scholarship program specifically? Um, what are your, what are your reflections on where the program is going and what kind of people might like to find out more and apply?

[00:39:37] **Shannon van Wyk:** [00:39:37] Um, my piece of advice is don't let imposter syndrome get you down. I feel like everyone who applies for the program for the Bertha scholars was like, I didn't think I would get it. Um, but if you've got something within you. I think, go ahead. And then I think like my last thing that I'd like to add is, um, I'm keen to see how we, I think that we've got this incredible [00:40:00] community within the Bertha like

center. And I would like to see how we move that into like other communiBes, like how do we create connecBons outside of just the people who know the work that we're doing?

[00:40:11] **Sampson Adotey:** [00:40:11] Yeah. And I think my, what I would add to what Shannon is saying is the fact that, um, we S. Within the be^er community, there's diversity, um, people working on different types of things. And I feel like if we ever had a planet to muddle, you know, what are, what, what the world we want. We'll look like. We have the experBse in the center to be able to get this done.

[00:40:37] **Fergus Turner :** [00:40:37] As menBoned earlier, the birther center has provided scholarships to more than 91 students from 16 African countries over the past 10 years. We asked some alumni about how the Bertha scholarship program has catalyzed their work. Let's hear what they had to say.

[00:40:54] **voice notes:** [00:40:54] Uh, the Bertha scholarship made it possible for me to, uh, a^end, uh, UCT [00:41:00] GSB, uh, MBA in 2020 and 2019. This was a foundaBonal year for me in terms of, uh, preparing myself for senng out as a. As an entrepreneur, uh, enabled me to set up a fund, um, deploy capital into social impact businesses. The, without the support or the birth of scholarship, I'd never been able to afford nor has, uh, found a Bme to walk on this journey. So it was quite fundamental and foundaBonal in terms of my personal development.

[00:41:42] Since finishing the Bertha Scholarship Program, I've changed both the country that I live in. And the job that I do not only did the Bertha scholarship program enable me to get the job that I currently have, but what I'm constantly struck by is in my new role, which is an internaBonal role, how much more [00:42:00] understanding I have of the challenges around diversity and the need to incorporate dissenBng and different views in the work that I do.

[00:42:07] Being a Bertha scholar, opened my eyes to many of the challenges that otherwise go and seen an unnoBced. And I now make a big part of my work is to make sure that these views are incorporated and understood by the stakeholders that I work with on a daily basis.

[00:42:23] **Fergus Turner :** [00:42:23] Hearing from these scholars really excites me. What a joy to know that a scholarship program can play such a significant role in catalyzing social innovaBon. That really makes a difference in the lives of people and communiBes as the Bertha center. Our desire is to influence business and government leaders to make the systemic changes needed to address key socioeconomic and environmental challenges.

[00:42:50] So our goal over the next five years is to support the growth of makers across the conBnent and globally, who can make a social impact in [00:43:00] communiBes, in business and in the public sector. We see social innovaBon scholarships as an important way to change the way which changing the world, because we know that if these hand selected students are well-trained and equipped. They will go out there and effecBvely play their part in changing the world.

[00:43:21] Thank you for tuning in to Just for a Change powered by the Bertha center for Social InnovaBon and Entrepreneurship, the podcast where we offer new perspecBves on social innovaBon and social jusBce.

[00:43:33] If you're curious about solving social issues in your community, or believe we can make a positive, tangible difference in the world, then make sure you subscribe so that you don't miss any of our upcoming episodes. .