

S3. Ep 5. Climate justice: there's no plan(et) B

[00:00:00] **Audio clip:** What do we want? Climate Justice! When do we want it? Now!

[00:00:03] **Ntombini Marrengane:** Climate change. Just transitions. Climate justice. Mash potato and Monet. Young people yelling at politicians. The rather chilling announcement at COP 27 by the UN secretary-general, António Guterres, that “humanity is on a high-way to climate hell” - you'd be forgiven for feeling a little confused and perhaps quite overwhelmed as to what this all means and how this really impacts your life and the lives of those you share the planet with.

[00:00:38] **Audio clip:** We also agree with the Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Gutierrez, that we can no longer afford any further delays in mitigating the effect of climate change. African countries are losing between 3 to 5% of their GDP [00:01:00] due to the effects of climate change. Now, although Africa itself carries the least responsibility for climate change, the continent experiences much of its harshest effects, and this reality is not disputed.

[00:01:20] **Audio clip:** According to some estimates, Africa loses between seven to 15 billion a year due to climate change, despite only emitting less than 4% of global emissions.

[00:01:32] **Ntombini Marrengane:** It's become more clear in the last few years that Africa is bearing the brunt of the impacts associated with climate change - even though African nations have been last on the list when it comes to contributing to the mess we now find ourselves in.

[00:01:46] Welcome, I am Ntombini Marrengane, host of season three of the *Just for a Change* podcast. If you've been following this series, you'll know that I have conversations with change-makers, from South Africa and further afield. [00:02:00] Sometimes

it takes time to join the dots. For example, you may have noticed that the weather patterns around you seem to be changing.

[00:02:08] You know, that usual rainfall at a certain time of year that you remember from when you were a kid. And now it doesn't seem to happen at the same time - or at all - as you remember. The good news is, you're not losing your memory...but the bad news is that you're experiencing the reality mentioned in a blog post released by the Western Cape Government in September this year that South Africa is experiencing a 2 - 4% temperature increase which impacts rainfall, water security and food supply amongst other things.

[00:02:37] The urgency of this particular issue has been growing - and at the Bertha Centre, the Innovative Finance portfolio team has been involved in work on the Green Outcomes Fund in collaboration with Green Cape, as well as the Green Development Plan. In addition to this, climate justice is one of the newer focus areas at the centre and we're committed to bringing our passion, experience and expertise to the table.

[00:03:06] Out of interest do you know when the first climate change protest happened? In 1999? Or perhaps 2005? According to National Geographic, the first climate change protest happened on 22 April 1970 when some 20 million people took part in a protest in New York City - it was the first ever Earth Day protest and we still observe Earth Day on this day every year all these years later.

[00:03:35] If people were already worried back then, why wasn't more done? Climate scientists have been sounding the alarm bell for years and 197 countries ratified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992 - the first global treaty to explicitly address climate change. And how does justice fit into the picture? Why is climate change a justice issue at its core?

[00:04:02] As with anything of this nature, the answer is complex... and joining me to unpack this is Dr Mao Amis, my guest for today. Dr Amis is a thought leader on the green economy, leadership, impact investing and green entrepreneurship as well as be-

ing the founding director of the African Centre for Green Economy - a non-profit multi-disciplinary advisory think tank working towards accelerating green and inclusive economy in Africa. Good afternoon, Mao.

[00:04:34] **Dr Mao Amis:** Hey, good afternoon, Ntombini. It's good chatting to you.

[00:04:37] **Ntombini Marrengane:** Thank you so much for joining me for this episode. It's a real privilege to have you share your story with us.

[00:04:42] **Dr Mao Amis:** So I'm originally from Uganda. Uh, that's where I was born. And, uh, my, I spent most of my early childhood there and as you probably know, Uganda is really a beautiful country. For those who have been - well endowed with nature, beautiful landscapes and so on.

[00:04:56] So that's where I grew up and I think that was really the [00:05:00] foundation, laid the foundation for what I do, I do today. Even though I always say that, um, South Africa is like second home because I've lived the longest here in, in, in South Africa and I started my career here and so on. But um, I still feel very strong attachment to [00:05:16] you know, my childhood years, which I think set the foundation for what I do today.

[00:05:21] **Ntombini Marrengane:** There are so many buzzwords and phrases that are used when it comes to climate change and the connected issues. Can you tell me what the term climate justice means and why climate change is also a justice issue?

[00:05:35] **Dr Mao Amis:** Talking about buzzwords, [00:05:36] you know, uh, it's true that, you know, there's a lot of things that are getting said around, but um, at the end of the day, there is a couple of issues that inform what we mean by climate justice. First is that obviously, um, the world is warming at a faster rate than it should, and that is partly because of human activities.

[00:05:56] Okay. In any undertakings, as we try to seek [00:06:00] solutions to climate change, we take cognitions of the fact that

those people who are most vulnerable, first of all, do not have the adaptive capacity to respond to the impact of climate change, even though they're not actually responsible for it in the first place.

[00:06:15] So climate justice is about inclusion, is about making sure that in the fight against climate change, we leave no one behind, especially now in a world that is very unequal. In the sense that there are a lot of people who are very poor. If you look at Africa, if you look at South Africa and so on.

[00:06:37] How can we make sure that climate change solutions are implemented in such a way that everyone, it's participatory, it's procedural to ensure that no one is left, left behind, especially those who will be impacted the most. So in a way, that's what climate justice is really about.

[00:06:52] **Ntombini Marrengane:** Could you perhaps share a practical example of what social injustice, directly linked to climate change looks like?

[00:06:58] I'd really like us to get [00:07:00] a deep understanding of the relationship between climate change and the broader context of social justice.

[00:07:06] **Dr Mao Amis:** You know, a few years ago we do work in the, in the Northern Cape and Northern Cape has had droughts that have lasted for years. You know, um, and Northern Cape for those who know, is basically the bread basket in many respects of South Africa in terms of grain production.

[00:07:24] And because of the persistent drought, farmers had to lay off, um, uh, people, uh, livestock, you know, died. and so on. And we found communities in this province of people who could not even provide, um, a daily meal for their households. And, and that's partly because of this drought, which made them to lose their jobs.

[00:07:52] And considering that they had no safety, um, net to fall into in terms of, you know, the [00:08:00] social grants that government is providing is not enough. But if you look and actually as-

sess what is the cause of that drought that has persisted, obviously is multiple factors, but climate change is a major contributing factor.

[00:08:14] So people being dispossessed because of, of, you know, changes in in climate is a classic example of what, um, an injustice looks like, and especially considering that there is no specific response or fallback, uh, position that they could be able to undertake in terms of ensuring that they respond effectively.

[00:08:34] **Ntombini Marrengane:** You mentioned the, the grant that the national government here in South Africa provides, um, to indigent households, but it's not enough. You think that's something that could potentially be used to address the climate injustice?

[00:08:50] **Dr Mao Amis:** No, absolutely. I mean, I just came back from the, uh, conference of parties around climate change and all of the big discussion points is around climate finance and, and [00:09:00] really the climate finance is about availing funding for developing and general poor countries to be able to effectively respond to the impact of climate change.

[00:09:13] And a lot of the conversations is around adaptation finance. Adaptation finance is basically finances that are required to build resilience, whether it's resilience at community level or resilience of ecosystems. Because think about it, if poor communities lose their source of livelihood, say their subsistence farmers, what is going to be their fallback strategy?

[00:09:40] You know, they will require support, whether it's from government, from other actors, to either respond to the, those impacts that they're facing or to be able to, uh, offset any of the challenges that they're facing in terms of, let's say providing of, of food at the household level. Because [00:10:00] if you think about subsistence farmers, most of them, their livelihoods depend on the gardens that they, you know, they, they have in their households.

[00:10:09] And if drought circumstances change, they will not be able to cultivate and therefore will not have food on the table.

And so those safety nets are extremely important. You know, on average when you and I are faced with a climate, uh, change, uh, situation, we are more likely to respond much more effectively because first of all, you are educated.

[00:10:33] So, um, you can get the right information in terms of understanding what the predictions are, uh, and, and people who are up the social ladder, you are protected in many ways. You've got insurance cover and things like that that we will allow you to be able to respond, but a poor household do not have those uh, packages or those systems that would [00:11:00] allow them to respond effectively.

[00:11:01] **Ntombini Marrengane:** What it sounds like you're sharing is that there are many levels to social inequality and climate change is really just exposing the vast gulfs there are between the haves and the have nots. Taking for granted something like having the right information about the weather report or understanding that there's going to be, um, differences in, in a particular season and that I'll need my household or another household will need to adapt.

[00:11:29] I think it's something that people just take for granted, particularly in the policy space, not thinking about those without access to even the most basic information.

[00:11:37] **Dr Mao Amis:** Absolutely. You know, information asymmetry is one of the really major challenge in delivering and ensuring that we build resilience [00:11:47] of our vulnerable people. And oftentimes it's not because the information is not there, it's just that maybe it's not in the right format, it's not channeled properly, and there's limited engagement around [00:12:00] key, um, actors within this space. And that's the other dimension around climate justice. It's an issue of representation, inclusion, and protection of rights of those who are most vulnerable.

[00:12:11] You know, sometimes these conferences that happen, they tend to almost come out as elite meetings. You know, you often ask where are those, the voices of those who are actually already on the branch of, um, of, of, of climate change. And often-

times those messages are not coming across effectively. As we talk now, you know, Somalia, for example, is on the branch of [00:12:35] catastrophic famine, but yet we're having these conferences that are going on, on and on, not really out of touch with the reality on the ground. It's really powerful.

[00:12:44] **Ntombini Marrengane:** I've never heard the term, information asymmetry, and yet it seems to really fit exactly what you're describing. Um, I, I've definitely want to talk about global meetings and their impact on , on the actual [00:13:00] implementation of, of climate change mitigation strategies.

[00:13:03] But first I'd like to ask you, since you've been in the sector for such a long time, how was it in the early years? Did people take you seriously when you brought up issues about the environment and protecting the earth? Or is that something that's changed as climate change has become a much more mainstream topic recently?

[00:13:25] **Dr Mao Amis:** Uh, you know, when I look at how the issues around climate change has been mainstream, I always, uh, juxtaposed it with my own career, um, trajectory. You know, at school, you know, traditionally we're all told, we must go to university, study to be an engineer, study to be a doctor, study to be a lawyer.

[00:13:42] So when I started Botany and Zoology, everyone frowned at what I was studying. It's like, Hey, even people at home was like, what is it that you're just studying? You know? So there was very low level of awareness around environmental, environmental issues, but with time, [00:14:00] I could actually just feel that people understood, um, where I was coming from as these issues became very mainstream, as people started feeling the impact of, you know, climate change essentially through things like, you know, flooding, um, uh, flooding and, uh, you know, extreme droughts and and and so on.

[00:14:20] But I'd also like to say that the momentum has been built partly by the impact of climate change becoming really in your face and also this impacts happening in other places like the de-

veloped world, you know, the hurricanes that happen, you know, in in, in places like America and so on, because obviously a lot of the narrative is driven by the media.

[00:14:41] So as the media became very involved in these, in these issues. Um, uh, then they started gaining traction.

[00:14:50] **Ntombini Marrengane:** Um, and for younger people, this is not a hypothetical issue. It's something that they can very clearly see happening, um, around them. Recently, one of my colleagues' sons [00:15:00] asked her what the point was of all the work that she does for social justice and social impact, if the world ceases to exist.

[00:15:07] Just quite an observation. Can you comment on the reality of the situation we find ourselves in and what are some of the greatest challenges facing developing countries like South Africa in the face of climate change?

[00:15:20] **Dr Mao Amis:** Look, I think that, you know, we are, we are, we're basically running out of time. You know, the world is not on a trajectory to keep global warming below 1.5.

[00:15:34] And, and that means significant challenges are going to arise. We're going to see increased sea level, sea level rise. Um, the intensity and frequency of extreme events is going to, is going to increase. So in many respects, your friends child is worried, especially as a young person that, you know, by the time [00:16:00] he's 20, 30 years, it'll be a completely different world if we don't act.

[00:16:08] Unfortunately, ou know, we have to act now because the sense of agency, um, has to be palpable in the sense that there's no time. Um, the challenges that we face are really, really critical. Uh, and, and, and for me talking about the young people, talking about your question, of South Africa is that, uh, of, I mean, the last couple of years there's really a bit of optimism because young people have taken leadership.

[00:16:35] They have taken responsibility because they have realized that, you know, the older people are never going to be able to deliver to them the outcomes that impact them. But more importantly, especially for Africa, it's a young continent. It's the young people who are going to lead, who are gonna be most impacted by climate change.

[00:16:53] And so really it excites me that you know, many young people, especially coming out of COP, that really young people are [00:17:00] engaged in activism, even in the negotiation rooms and so on, because I think young people bring a sense of urgency to the, to the negotiation space, which hopefully would allow governments to act much more faster.

[00:17:13] And for a country like South Africa and for most developing countries, obviously the challenge is, two-fold. If you look at the country, South Africa for example, is that South Africa is a highly coal-dependent economy. So on the one hand, South Africa has to decarbonise to move away from a coal dependency to a much more renewable energy trajectory.

[00:17:37] Yet on the other hand, South Africa needs to develop. South Africa is faced with significant social, economic, um, uh, challenges in high levels of inequality, poverty, and things like that. So how do you balance, um, develop and climate change?

[00:17:55] **Ntombini Marrengane:** Young people are living in a different world and [00:18:00] it makes me wonder: what are the barriers, um, that sort of keep us trapped in this endless loop of discussions, um, particularly [00:18:11] in a context where countries which are not principle polluters are the ones that are finding themselves having to pay the excesses of more developed nations, isn't that a bit unfair? And do you think that climate justice means the same thing in the developed and the developing world?

[00:18:29] **Dr Mao Amis:** Obviously it's unfair and I think that has been, um, uh, recognized even with the parties and, and, and during, I think there was COP 15 in, in, in Paris, there was a princi-

ple that has been agreed about collective, but differentiated responsibilities and, and all that means is that we are in this together.

[00:18:55] There's only one earth, there's only one climate system. So, [00:19:00] even though we are not responsible for this impact of climate change in the terms of developing countries, we developing countries will be impacted. So how can everyone respond to addressing climate change in a manner that, but recognizes the differentiated responsibility? Considering that developed countries have more resilience, their, their economies are much more mature.

[00:19:29] Developing countries need to reach a level where they can, uh, they, they would've developed, they would've been to resilience in the economy. And that's why it's important that developing countries, developed countries avail the financial requirements that developing countries need. Um, and one of those, for example, which was the outcome of COP 27, is the idea of loss and damage in the sense that.

[00:19:57] There are, I mean, South [00:20:00] Africa, Durban is a classic example. You know, earlier this year, uh, Durban suffered catastrophic, uh, flooding, you know, and billions was lost in, um, in infrastructure. That damage and loss that has happened can never be recovered. and it's partly because of climate change. Who is going to be responsible for compensating those who have suffered that impact of, they say for the flooding.

[00:20:25] And that is, that is, that's what the developing countries were pushing for at COP 27 - to set up a special fund of loss and damage so that it can respond to those specific cases of damage and loss that has resulted because of climate change.

[00:20:40] **Ntombini Marrengane:** Sounds like there's lots of realization of the costs of climate change, but little action to close the gap around the inequalities of climate change.

[00:20:52] You just mentioned the floods here in South Africa, the people who suffered the most were the people who had the least to begin with, um, and [00:21:00] found themselves. Going from a

position where they were living in precarious shelter to not having shelter, for example, you said everyone needs to take up the mantle themselves, so can you please tell us a bit more about the Africa Center for a Green Economy and the work that you do?

[00:21:18] **Dr Mao Amis:** So the centre will be this actual 10th year and the vision we had for them was to create a platform for emerging leaders on the continent to be at the forefront of driving our development agenda. That's, so that's really our primary goal, that, you know, we can't wait on anyone else to drive the change, to deliver the change that we require.

[00:21:41] And so that's really the, the foundation of what we're founded in. But our key, uh, positioning is that, obviously we need to build evidence base. We need to ensure that when we're making decision, decisions are driven by the right kind of information, by the [00:22:00] right kind of evidence, because then we can be able to track progress.

[00:22:06] We can be able to understand what, um, what works work does in work and how we experiment to push the agenda forward. So our center really focuses on that around. As a think tank, we actually refer to ourselves as a 'think do' tank, you know. It's one thing to just think and publish papers, but it's a whole different story to really be on the ground and push those boundaries.

[00:22:30] Um, we really believe that, um, implementation of strategies that either lead to climate adaptation or build local resilience is quite important. And so a lot of our work really is driven about how do we ensure that these principles, these challenges around addressing the challenges related to climate change environmental degradation actually happens at the local level?

[00:22:52] And our work takes has [00:23:00] taken, it takes very different dimensions. One, from a financing perspective. We are really trying to understand, how can climate finance flow more effectively to the local level? At the local level, do we have the systems and so on to receive this climate finance and to implement them in a way that you can get value, value for money?

[00:23:23] Just to give you an example, you know, South Africa just recently, Has been, uh, awarded by a couple of developing countries, 8.6 billion to help to support the country's, um, energy transition. And so for us, we, we very much interested in seeing how those finances going to flow to the ground.

[00:23:44] What differences is it going to make, whether it's in Mpumalanga, whether its Eskoms coal plants are, are located? What is the impact going to be on those, on those communities? So it's really around understanding climate finance and how that flows because we think that, um, [00:24:00] We are in a position that act as an intermediary or bridging, bridging institution.

[00:24:06] I always, when I ask, I get asked this question. I say like, we come from these communities. We have stayed hungry. We have walked to school bare feet. We understand the pains of the man on the ground, but at the same time, we can operate in high level spaces, whether it's with investors, with policy makers, so on.

[00:24:27] So we want to see ourself as a conduit of, uh, bridging the, bridging the gap between what I see as lack of implementation on the ground and at this high level space where a lot of the talk happens, but there's no action.

[00:24:43] **Ntombini Marrengane:** Absolutely. Earlier this year you did a TEDx talk titled How to Build a Wellbeing Economy in Africa.

[00:24:50] Can you tell me more about what you mean by a well-being economy and also talk to the concept and practice of just transitions?

[00:24:58] **Dr Mao Amis:** Cool. Uh, so [00:25:00] a, well, a wellbeing economy in a nutshell is an economy that recognizes the limits of nature and that an economy that does not have a negative impact on, on the environment, an economy where people are happy.

[00:25:17] People are satisfied with what they're doing and an economy that do not really degrade our limited resources. Now, if you think about our current economic model, I always give the

analogies like a leaking bucket. You know when a bucket is leaking at the bottom, you pour water, it'll never get full, and that is because

[00:25:37] Uh, our economic model is built in such a way that we extract from nature. We extract from nature, we use it to power our economy, and we release it as waste into nature. So, so that is unsustainable. That is a, a linear economic model that is problematic. And, and so a wellbeing economy. In [00:26:00] a way it's trying to say like how can we build an economy that is much more circular, an economy more important, that centers people's needs as one of the most important aspects to, um, to, to, to the, to, to the way of doing things.

[00:26:09] Uh, so, so, so really that is what I mean by a wellbeing, a, a wellbeing economy - that puts people first. And also recognizing that we operate in a resource constrained world. How can we make sure that our economic models do not degrade the environment as we know it, but regenerate the economy while meeting our human needs?

[00:26:40] **Ntombini Marrengane:** That sounds revolutionary Mao. Um, particularly when we, when we face the fact that our predominant economic model is one that is based on extraction and not necessarily regeneration. So [00:27:00] what you're talking about here is, is is very exciting. Um, recently President Ramaphosa and South Africa were praised by world leaders at COP 27 for its just transition plan.

[00:27:13] Can you comment on how you see this in comparison to other efforts made on the continent and the global south?

[00:27:18] **Dr Mao Amis:** Just energy transition partnership that South Africa, um, has set up with developing developed country partners, including US, EU and so on, is quite revolutionary in the sense that it's the first attempt that an economy essentially is attempting to transition at light scale from a coal-dependent, high carbon intensive model to a low carbon, development trajectory.

[00:27:51] So that is one element of, um, the revolutionary nature of that partnership but more importantly, [00:28:00] South Africa has committed that in its attempt to transition to a low carbon development, they're going to ensure that no one is left behind. They're going to ensure that vulnerable communities that are impacted.

[00:28:15] By this potential energy transition, uh, gained from this, from this process are more, are more empowered and hopefully new opportunities are created to address some of the systemic challenges South Africa is faced with in terms of poverty alleviation, inequality, and so on. So I think that that's, that's really very important.

[00:28:42] Um, the key issue is, and it's just like with everything else, is how effective that implementation is going to happen, and questions have been asked already, how engaged are the most affected parties? You know, we are [00:29:00] talking about climate justice here. Um, to what extent, uh, do vulnerable communities engage with these processes? [00:29:08] And that's a lot of the work that we're actually doing at our center

[00:29:11] **Ntombini Marrengane:** Point in mentioning that implementation seems to be, um, the South African policy makers Achilles heel because we can design beautiful and well-structured, um, ideals and perhaps even map them out to a reasonable degree. But when it comes time to mobilize the resources and the people to actually make the change happen, we sort of stumble there, um, repeatedly.

[00:29:40] And I'm wondering in an environment where you have this top down decision making, how does this work of making climate justice and just transitions a reality impact the power dynamics, especially in underserved or under resourced [00:30:00] communities which are directly affected by climate change?

[00:30:04] **Dr Mao Amis:** Power dynamics always plays out in all of these issues because at the end of the day, the person who has the information, who has access to decision makers in many re-

spects has an advantage in terms of how things eventually play out.

[00:30:21] But what I like about South Africa is that South Africa has also got a very strong civil society. You know, government can make these announcements are nice, but you know, we have a very strong civil society that will always question some of these announcements, which I think helps to keep, um, uh, to put in place a checks and balances and to realize that, um, uh, for things to work you have to work with others.

[00:30:48] And for me, I think that's really the key thing is that you know, we cannot sit here and say like, you know, South Africa government is not delivering or shouldn't, uh, is, is struggling with, with implementation and so on. [00:31:00] At the end of the day, it's, we're all in this together. It's a shared risk and once we recognize that this is a shared risk, the question then becomes, what is the role of different actors in this to ensure smooth implementation of something so revolutionary? Or, how can the private sector, how can that investment be leveraged by more investment from the private sector?

[00:31:26] How can vulnerable communities be empowered to engage more meaningfully in this, in this process? Because ultimately this is about them. Ultimately it's about building resilience of those vulnerable, vulnerable communities.

[00:31:41] **Ntombini Marrengane:** Definitely. Um, I like, I like the optimistic tone of your answer. Um, even as we face a very daunting problem. Um, in the spirit of optimism, can you share any interesting examples or projects, um, that you've come into contact with, either on the [00:32:00] continent or elsewhere where they are doing climate justice?

[00:32:06] **Dr Mao Amis:** You know, when I was, when I was contemplating this question, you know, one thing I, I. And I think I've said this over and over in this, uh, interview is that, you know, with climate change, there's no one solution that fits all. Okay? Uh, and so I I, I wouldn't want to say like, there is this one example of things at work.

[00:32:29] Perhaps what I can say is - what are some of the building blocks? What are some of the ingredients that are, that are required to be put in place if one is to actually achieve Climate Justice? And most of my experiences in is, is, is in, is in Africa. I think that there are a couple of things that needs to be put in place.

[00:32:51] One is that we need to empower the voices of youth and women because they're the most vulnerable. [00:33:00] They are the ones that are gonna be impacted the most. Um, and they, especially women are in a much more better position to influence how things get done, especially at the household level. So any discussion that doesn't really recognize the presence of youth and women in the room.

[00:33:17] I just think it's, um, it's bound to fail. So that's really important and we're seeing, or we're seeing across the continent, especially with, with donors and so on, that you know, you cannot implement a project that does not really put women and youth at the center of delivery.

[00:33:37] So that's one. Um, the second critical ingredient that is required, obviously an enabling policy environment. You know, there's so much that you can only do on your own as actors, as activists, as community members if the, the vision is not very clear from the top. So enabling policy environment is [00:34:00] very clear in terms of, for example, recognizing the importance of a.

[00:34:05] Change policy in place and working with different government structures to ensure that is, um, that is, that is implemented. And then a third probably there are a lot of others, but ultimately the financing is very critical. You cannot do anything without, um, Finance. So ensuring that the right finances flow to the right spaces, to the right actors is going to be critical.

[00:34:29] But more importantly is that we need to be very innovative in how finance flows, whether in terms of the mechanism of the financing itself or the actors, the mode of delivery and so on, we need to think outside the box. And at cop, I made the strong cases that, you know, our current economic model, especially the

financing, uh, setup is not going to deliver us to a new economy, to a low carbon carbon economy.

[00:34:59] We didn't talk [00:35:00] much about this, but a lot of the work that we do at the center is around entrepreneurship and how we support entrepreneurs and it pains that entrepreneurs go into accessing, um, climate finance. So until we start to think about financing in a very innovative way, we will be stuck.

[00:35:17] **Ntombini Marrengane:** I wholeheartedly agree. What do you think are some other things that the average citizen can do to shoulder their part of the climate justice effort?

[00:35:27] **Dr Mao Amis:** Look, um, Obviously as individuals, you know, all of us have what is we call a footprint, um, a footprint related to, uh, your consumption patterns, you know, um, taking local action to make sure that your own footprint is reduced, you're much more, uh, sustainable in terms of how you consume your goods, your goods and services.

[00:35:58] But also I think, as [00:36:00] individuals, as citizens, we need to be more engaged in these issues. We need to recognize that these issues affect us all, um, and we need to call our leaders into action. In fact, if you look at how big businesses have been able to take decisive action and they, it is because of activism of citizens who started asking questions, uh, around, I mean, I'll give you a classic example, you know, in Amsterdam, the biggest, um, which is, which is one of the world's biggest flower auction actually, and I, I think about 40% of flowers that are auctioned in Amsterdam come from one specific, uh, valley in, in, in Kenya called the Niversia.

[00:36:45] And a few years ago, consumers in, in, in the, in Europe started asking like, do you know where your flowers is being produced? Do you know that a lot of fertilizer is running into those rivers that is polluting those river systems? Do you know that [00:37:00] uh, workers are being unfairly paid wages to produce your flowers?

[00:37:06] And that's those simple questions being asked by consumers force, these companies to go back and to completely transform their value chains to increase workers' wages, to make sure that, um, their plants don't pollute the rock river systems. And so, and it's actions that started by individuals and, and eventually companies ha realize it's actually affecting their bottom lines and they have to take action.

[00:37:34] So do not underestimate the capacity of an individual to make a change.

[00:37:42] **Ntombini Marrengane:** No, that's very powerful. Very powerful indeed. Um, and there's no doubt that a lot of what you do must have its challenges. So maybe you could share with us now, what keeps you hopeful about this work and what is your vision for a more just world, particularly where it comes to climate change?

[00:38:00] **Dr Mao Amis:** Look, I think that what keeps me hopeful is that, first of all, we only have one planet. You know, we have no planet B, there's no another planet you could move in. So we're starting here. We have absolutely no option but to do, to do what we do.

[00:38:22] You know, the, I think that what keeps me doing what I do is, um, the satisfaction one derives out of this, that, you know, in your own small way you are able to nudge a conversion forward. You're able to nudge, you know, so we are able to put solutions on the table that actually deliver, deliver results. So obviously, I don't want to say this is an individual effort, but it's just that I think.

[00:38:54] The sense of agency has become so, um, important that [00:39:00] we have no option but to do what, to do what we're doing. And it's also beautiful because, you know, um, um, the work that we do creates spaces, allows you to engage with people at all level, uh, and, and really, um, puts you at the front of seeing how some of these key challenges could be in, could be solved.

[00:39:25] **Ntombini Marrengane:** Very interesting. Thank you so much for your time.

[00:39:27] **Dr Mao Amis:** Thank you Ntombini. Thanks everyone.

[00:39:29] **Ntombini Marrengane:** I don't know about you, but I'm thinking about the future and how it might look. Change needs to happen at every level of society and it's easy to look at the macro level and point fingers, but forget about the small things that we can do every day to be active citizens in this very crucial time in the world.

[00:39:47] I can't help but think that Leo Tolstoy was on to something when he said: "Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself." - with all that said though, I'm encouraged that more people are taking active steps to become more aware and make the lifestyle changes necessary to ensure that our planet is around for quite a bit longer.

[00:40:10] And let's never forget that often the people most impacted by climate change did not cause it - and that is a justice issue we can and need to get behind. And that brings us to the end of another episode. Thank you for tuning in to season 3 of the **Just for a change** podcast, powered by the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

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