

# **To what extent are UK's middle-class consumers aware of the global inequalities associated with food production and consumption?**

## **Mebrak Ghebreweldi**

### **About me and what motivates me to do what I do**

My name is Mebrak. In my language Tigrinya it means morning sunshine. I am born and bred in Eritrea. I am number six of nine.

Eritrea was an Italian colony, so my parents were born and grew during the Italian fascist colonisation of Eritrea (1880 -1941). My father always tells me that during the Italian colony they could not walk on the high streets of Asmara the capital city of Eritrea. The city was divided into several areas, with the beautiful areas reserved for the Italians and the poor areas for the Eritreans. Education for the Eritreans was 4<sup>th</sup> grade maximum unless one was selected to become an interpreter or a driver for the Italian offices or families. The Italian reason for not educating Eritreans was that it was "better to keep them ignorant than teach them to become rebellious".

The Italians were defeated by the allied forces in WW2 and the British took the responsibility to administrate Eritrea until the United States told the UN to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia.

UK recommendations were to divide the country, the Muslim Eritreans to join Sudan and the Christians to Ethiopia. The federation did not work but resulted in 30 years of war between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Two neighbours killed each other for more than 30 years.

During the 12 years of British colonisation of Eritrea (1941-1952), UK dismantled and sold 671 industrial factories. Between 1920 -1940, Eritrea was 2<sup>nd</sup> to South Africa in manufacturing. However, UK sold the manufacturing factories to compensate what they lost during the five months fighting with Mussolini on the Eritrean mountains. WW2 (*Keren 1940 -1941*).

The Scottish and Indian regiments lost 5000 British soldiers in Eritrea and their bodies are buried in Keren and Asmara.

Why am I telling this story? because it still makes me angry but also helps me to fight for justice. Why is it that the powerful went and are still going to the land of the poor to treat the native people in the cruellest manner? Why? Is my motivation to look for justice, seek for change, explore, and learn. History is still controlled by the rich and it seems it is continuing that way with little change.

### **"Who controls the past controls the future' (Banks et al, 2018)**

#### **Presenting the problem**

Transnational food trade systems have connected producers and consumers through the foods we have on our kitchen tables and in our cupboards. However, this direct connection might also be the cause of global inequality, worsening the environmental catastrophe and land grabbing from poor countries for more food production and consumption.

This short research project is interested particularly in whether UK middle class food consumers are aware of those connections, inequalities, and environmental impacts. The concept of this research is to find out authentic response from random members of the community with middle class education and income levels, who have the capacity to buy food as they wish. The researcher will also explore

if participants are aware of food waste and where their food might come from. Participants will be asked to share their suggestions of how to reduce food waste, inequality, and environmental damage. Participants will share their insights on whether the existing food production and consumption system is sustainable.

The aim of this very short research is to find out to what extent are middle class consumers aware of global inequality associated with food production and consumption. The research is interested in finding out if middle class consumers are aware of the issues related to food consumption and if they know where the staple foods in their kitchen cupboards and on their tables comes from such as coffee, tea, sugar, most spices, nuts etc. This might seem complex and daunting, but the researcher aims to understand UK middle class consumers reactions to questions about global food production and consumption and their role in global inequality.

The overarching questions would be to what extent are UK's middle-class consumers aware of the global inequalities associated with food production and consumption?

### **Literature Review**

As the world population is growing the need for land, water and minerals becomes more and more essential. Perhaps these three resources are under pressures as they are fundamental needs of mankind. Their availability is reducing due to environmental change and population growth (Schneider et al, 2011). Much of the planet, minerals and land is being submerged under the sea or getting dryer and more arid, so the production of food is becoming more complex (Food and Agricultural Organisation, 2007). Those with resources can buy or lease wetland, forests, and open wild land to grow human and animal food. The people of the poor countries might not have a say in what is happening to them and the land they live on (Anywaa, 2018). As a witness of land grabbing by foreign investors, I believe that unequal share of resources and food production and consumption are some of the key factors to the global inequality.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century food production has been increasingly shaped by the discourse of globalisation. This discourse is no longer located in one country but increasingly comes from international countries in the name of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The World Bank lends so much money for investors to buy land in developing countries to grow food for animal consumption and to grow flowers (Anywaa, 2018).

In the article written by The Anywaa Survival Organisation (ASO) in May 2018, it is stated by Nyikaw Ochalla, Executive Director of ASO in a press release.

*In Ethiopia Gambela, foreign and domestic investors have forced indigenous peoples out of their ancestral lands, which threatens their food security and ability to protect their natural environments and the ecological systems of the wetlands and forests. (Anywaa Survival Organisation, 2018)*

I would be interested to use the above scenario and start with very simple questions to find out if the food consumers from middle class UK might be aware of where their food comes from. Global inequality is forcing communities to be displaced from their fertile land to produce food throughout the year to the markets of developed countries. Ironically the poor countries are also importing cheap food such oils and sweet drinks etc. from China and India. In the short course in short International Trade Short course have participated at Sussex Innovation centre, I had the opportunity to watch the trading activity of each African country in real time. It was very clear that poor countries export raw materials and import so much from developed countries (Sussex University, 2016)

The Naivasha River in Kenya has been the home of hippos for thousands of years. Its water levels are receding simply because of the constant drought and the 24/7 year-round use to grow roses and other flowers. Cutting the rain forest of Amazon for timber and palm oil needs no reference as we see it every day on our evening news.

Ethiopia is one of the most gifted country in the world, with freshwater rivers including the river Nile passing through the country. It is the country where coffee is found and became humankind's social drug of choice. Rituals of coffee roasting and drinking started in these areas centuries ago (Kirshanan, 2017).

*Coffee, from its centre of origin in Ethiopia, made its way to Yemen, possibly around the 6th century. From Yemen, coffee spread to Cairo, Damascus, and Istanbul, leading to the birth of the coffeehouse. Following this, coffeehouses opened in Europe, the first one in Venice in 1645 and in Oxford in 1650. (Kirshanan, 2017 p2).*

However, Ethiopia is known globally for famine and starvation. How is this possible? During a short course on international trade at Sussex University, it is for the first time I have learned how to make sense about International Trade and how World Trade Organisation controls most of international trade policies and trade rules. Foreign investment in agricultural land goes across the developing world largely in Africa where productive land is cheap and easily available (Friends of the Earth, Europe, 2010). For example, almost half of the foreign investment in agriculture projects (48%) are in sub-Saharan African countries. So why are so many African countries still dependant on western countries' aid money? The UK government cut the foreign aid from 0.7 of the national GDP to 0.5 GDP/year (BBC Newsnight, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021). For the last 5 years there is so much talk around the slogan "Africa is rising" and African land is considered "Agriculture's final frontier" (Woertz, 2012). Many scholars dubbed this as second scramble for Africa.

Since moving to the UK but travelling to Africa 3 to 4 times a year, I have always wondered if UK communities are aware of the above communities' suffering. Perhaps this is where there is a need for community education in connecting people in the UK with who might be growing their food and how they have been paid and treated. The notion of 'we are together' is the fact that we share the same food growing in different part of the planet, each consumer wherever they live is connected through consumption of production. If every country, region, continent is interested only in its own population, this is increasing concerns over food security and the sustainability of food production (Ambalam, 2013).

The Fair-Trade initiative was set up in 1990 to tackle these issues by developing direct connections with farmers from developing countries, such as the wine farmers in South Africa, and it is a very innovative initiative. However, the chance for these initiatives to be successful is very slim due inherent external and internal inequality between black and white farmers, capacity, and complex chains of international food market. Fraser writes "injustice belongs not to "the space of places", but to "the space of flows"" (Fraser, 2008, p. 23), meaning that the causes of many injustices in our globalised world are not territorial but emerge from the relations between places. Can one community or one country fight global inequality, environmental change, and food waste? Perhaps not. However, community education might help individuals to introduce change within their own lives and influence others.

## **Research methods**

Using qualitative research methods, the researcher has carried out document analysis of global food production and consumption. The researcher interviewed three participants and facilitated one focus group with five participants. Qualitative research methods work better for this kind of discussion as this is very much a conversation to reveal awareness, experience personal ethics and

education. Understanding the impact of food production and consumption is also about understanding humanity's ethical mindset and connection with other people. In the UK, life seems to be too busy, and many people might not check where their tea and coffee comes from and who might be growing it. However, until we are aware of all these connections and connect with food growers, the land and the environment, consumption of unnecessary food, the impact to global inequality and sustainability might not be easy to understand. Could communities be engaged with universities and organisations to investigate their community's food consumption, and what might necessitate new analysis to inform our understanding of what works at a community level? Where is food is coming from how much of it is going to waste and why? What effective community engagement, teaching and learning looks like to develop community awareness? Before considering further these questions I needed to embark on my research, I approached eight participants all of whom middle class are at least in terms of their education. Three female middle-aged professionals in health and social care (in one-to-one interviews). Five participants were in the focus group discussion with two young female professionals with degrees and masters and one young male with masters and two experienced social workers. All interviews and the focus group were held on Zoom because of restrictions brought about by Covid 19.

### **Research questions:**

1. Do you have any of the following in your kitchen cupboards: coffee, tea, nuts, sugar, bananas, hot chocolate, ginger, red or black pepper?
2. How often do you think of their origin, for example where they grow or who grows them?
3. If your answer to the previous question was 'often', do these thoughts inform your opinion on the interdependence of humanity? If yes, how?
4. What do you think about the balance of food consumption between the rich and the poor in global geographical terms (Global North vs South)?
5. How sustainable do you think the current global production and consumption of food is?
6. What do you think could be done to reduce global inequality in terms food production and consumption?
7. Do you have any suggestions to achieve a fairer world for humans, animals, and the environment?

### **Focus group discussion with five participants**

1. To what extent are the UK's middle-class consumers aware of the global inequalities?
2. What can be done to affect global economic inequality?
3. How sustainable do you think current food production and levels of consumption by middleclass consumers is?

### **Ethical considerations**

This course encouraged me to consider and reflect on my own knowledge attitude, openness and how accommodating I am in my communication. How attentive am I? How good listener am I? How should I deal with different thoughts from my own? I keep asking myself and I think I will keep questioning my behavior and attitude for the rest of my life.

I am glad we have covered the role of a researcher while involving participants. I have always considered myself to be a responsible person. I don't know what makes me responsible, but I think it is from my mother. I saw her looking after communities in Eritrea, particular young mothers. So, I think growing watching my parents taking care of their village and then working for DRI and Vandu made me feel responsible, for the people around me. I took good responsibility with the individual interviewed and the focus group.

Research is not my strong area until now. I am part of so many small research projects but not academic research.

I am giving evidence below of three principles from Ethics of Care (Ward and Gahagan, 2010) that I followed while carrying out the research.

**Attentiveness:** It was important to pay careful attention to what was said during the research process. Although some of the responses to the questions surprised me, I had to make sure that I responded to whatever was said, carefully and attentively and that my subsequent questioning was able to build on what they had said, even if it went into a different direction than what I had expected.

**Competence:** I think I am competent in terms of community research because I am interested in community social inequality and disparities of equity and opportunities. I absolutely challenge racial discrimination. In reflection I think I have good competence in community research but there is always a room for improvement. During this research I showed my competence by being organized about the interviews and the focus groups, asking prompt questions when necessary and sticking to the agreed time frame.

**Trust** is the most important issue to me. I trust anyone who is involved in the research. I think what makes the interview so much enjoyable is that they have full trust in what I am trying to find out and they seem very committed to change the global challenges we are facing. Prior to our meeting I sent the consent form and emailed them the questions. At some point in the past, they have all have engaged with me in projects and training. They all trust me from experience, knowing that I would adhere to confidentiality.

It was very interesting to facilitate the interviews on one-to-one basis and facilitate the group focus conversations. Their response to my research questions was different from each other and very different from what I expected. I am glad to say that I was interested to hear their thoughts and how they responded to my questions, so I asked them for more.

How can they buy fair trade? Many people might not in a position buying fair trade product as it is more expensive.

## **Interview findings**

### **Understanding of the impact of global injustice on people**

I am from Africa myself and came to study in 1992. For the first five years I was so much impressed by the development of European countries, America, and cities such as Dubai. I also travel to African countries such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zambia Sudan etc.

My interest in global inequality started from my own experience of occupation, war, and conflict. However, my interest in production and consumption started from my traveling to Kenya. I have seen where the tea plantation and where the Roses flowers grow all around Naivasha River. I have seen the massive Coffee plantation in Ethiopia, mining plants in Western part of Eritrea and deforestation in Zambia. All this food, timber and mineral producing countries are perceived "poor". On the other hand, the majority people of those countries consume so small and very much from what they grow. Land and water are so important for their survival.

I joined this course because in a small way I wanted to find out how UK middle class are connected to the food they eat and if they are aware of whom might be growing them, how interdependent do they think we are and how they perceive the global inequality. They said: -

*"No Never I would not know where they come from or who might grow them. The only one I would think most often about is maybe bananas because the stickers on them are very visible.*

*Probably rather than thinking about the interdependence of humanity because of the recent campaigns, there's more thought goes towards the environmental impact of the food and the carbon footprint and how far it's travelled, So I'm thinking more about the environment than about the people who produce it.*

While this is a very honest answer, I find it quite surprising as they are not picking the fact that who needs saving is the humans and all the living as the planet will go on with us or without us "as Alpha & Omega". This notion of saving the environment needs to reframe as the need is clearly to save humans by stopping greed and share the planet's resources equally and wisely.

Thinking of environment without thinking of those who are producing your food suggests disconnection and incomplete understanding of the environment.

It is suggested that the environmental impact of carbon footprint due long distance food transportation is bad for the environment. Of course, it is however, to provide the unlimited consumption of food with no interruption throughout the year, food must come from far. We are having strawberries in the middle of the winter. They must grow abroad or with massive energy consumption they can grow inside glass houses given the right temperature. Much research has confirmed that massive land garbing is taking place in Africa and the Amazon basin and of course this is taking place else where too so the developed countries could have consistent supply of food. Thinking of the environment without thinking of unlimited production and consumption is incompletely missing the cause of environmental disasters.

Most participants of the research responding to the global inequality thinks it is too big to talk about at a community level. In general, there is unspoken guilty about how much we consume but when try to raise the global inequality it is perceived as "depressing" among some of middleclass colleagues' friends by saying "Oh how sad... enough of that lets' change the subject".

## **Awareness of their own privilege**

All participants of this research are aware of own privileges and the excessive consumption.

*We have two big fridge and two big freezers. They don't always manage to get through, we take a massive trolley around the supermarket. I've got four children, so I buy a lot*

*And in the south, the global south, they face long periods of food shortages. So poor, they've got more uncertain weather conditions.*

So much food! So, for sure the global North Vs global South are in different shopping habits. Most of us buy little and often we just stock up massively. This is the shopping habits that need tackling at a community level. Perhaps our relationship with food consumption has gone very unhealthy for years and needs much awareness at schools and community level. We also have parts of our communities that cannot shop to fill one fridge and get food from food banks.

The finding of this interviews has confirmed that over the years consumptions of good and food becomes the driving factor of making money. A single image of wealth is measured by how much one consumes. The bosses of Amazon and Virgin airlines travelled to the outer space recently. To me this is inequality manifested itself in spectacular manner of consumption with massive carbon footprint.

All interview participants agreed that the global inequality is big for them to think of. "It is not sustainable "We are greedy" are some of their responses.

It is noted that some of the younger participants said, "I am not informed well enough" "I don't perceive myself as middle class" "Big companies such as Nestle are the cause of global inequality".

Of course, many young people are not informed about global inequality or the impact of excessive consumption because it is not discussed at schools, collages, community centres, webinars, workshops, and universities unless one is interested to read research findings. If middle class consumers those who read books, articles, travel reasonably are so disconnected and not interested to tackle inequality or teach their children about global inequality, excessive consumption, and environmental disasters, how can young people able to connected to what is going on socially or environmentally?

## **Global organisations to solve injustice, excessive consumption, and environmental impact**

We all wish to pass on the planet to the next generation and that was supported by each participant of the research. I have asked every participant if they have any suggestions to achieve a fairer world for humans, animals, and the environment?

“I had a little giggle to myself when I read that question because I thought, what if I knew the answer to that I'd be running the UN or the Agricultural Organization or something?”

The above statement is telling that global organisation must do something to achieve a fairer world for all living. Organisations such as (WFP) UN, World Bank and UNESCO.

Those organisations are there for many years. We know them and some of them such as World Trade Organisation (WTO) The world Bank including UNSECO might be the as big offenders as international private traders in my opinion. Of course, they have laws such as how food and animals are farmed, international trading of food standards, perhaps miles and carbon footprint levels. World bank fund and control education, Trade, and Investment. If we are going to leave it to them it might be too late simply because they are part and parcel of the capitalist machine and get their money from the rich countries and corporates.

Educating our children, educating our communities might achieve more than expecting the global or international organizations or our politicians. It's got to come from all levels at the same time. Buying cheaper more convenient options for some people is necessity but doing it with full awareness and informed mindset is different. People will go for cheaper option according to their capacity and resources.

### **The Global North is greedy**

The participants of this research are all aware of the greediness of the West but from the Euro-centric point of view.

*“Well, the global, North, as a generalization is greedy, and we have an abundance of food. And we waste a lot of food. And in the south, the global south, they face long periods of food shortages. So poor, they've got more uncertain weather conditions”.*

This response is coming from a very western prospective they are “poor” while the most fertile lands are found in the poor countries what makes them “poor” needs more investigation. I feel this research should investigate the above assumptions of UK middle-class further. The participants did not make any connections between the global inequality and the deteriorating environmental catastrophe. To me they are two side of the same coin, but all participants seem to divide them as they are very different and disconnected from each other. The above response also suggested their single story of Africa such as they are “poor”. This is what they heard, sow and told by media and social media. This what history books, education, story books and films said and wrote about the “poor countries”. The history of colonialism, land grubbing, years of minerals extract are not told in full yet.

On this question, the younger participants are aware that in the UK there are people who may only be able to afford to buy the cheaper, non-ethical sources of food. And it's interesting to look at the intersection of race and ethnicity as well as many other communities who are in the same position households who are living below the poverty line.

As mentioned, global North in general has been greedy. However they younger generation seems to be more open for community conversations about shopping habits and fair-trade to save the planet to the next generation. They seems keen to change their life style.



## Removing social license

I have five participants and I wanted to ask them about solutions to the global inequality and the excessive production and consumption.

The overarching questions was:- To what extent are UK's middle-class consumers aware of the global inequalities associated with food production and consumption? How do we reduce it?

*"I am not well informed to talk about global inequality but I think like social licensing. It's an interesting idea. Like removing social license, the idea is that people only do things if they feel that they're socially licensed to do them".*

Everyone who participated in this research has pointed to the direction of community education as early as possible. For children to learn how to look after the environment as part of the national school curriculum. I agree that awareness about the increasing globalized world and how food production is linked to the climate change is urgent. The education approach by targeting schools and college and community centres is probably the best way forward.

*"However long it might take changing habits and make it mainstream is going to help reducing inequality and enhancing the environment slowly".*

Many young people are changing their eating habits to vegetarian and vegan. The social taboo around that is gradually being eroded and people are feeling less and less eating meat. Maybe something similar could happen around consuming foods.

*"Removing social license to just thoughtlessly consume those products in large quantities like we do now".*

Our habits did not grow over night. Developing consistent people's awareness leads to behavioural change over time. Reiterating repeatedly, exposing people to facts and images and other things. Overtime, I think a critical mass is reached in people's awareness by consistence. And then at some point, we will reach the tipping point of changing communities' behaviour of consuming.

The group agreed on slow process of a behaviour change. Excessive consumption led to global inequality and environmental impact. To reverse this, it will be slow process of a behaviour gradually moving from being like fully, not just fully acceptable. Over time it will becomes a behaviour that's up for up for contention.

*"We need to get to the sort of outside of people's awareness, to kind of central to their decision-making they consume, environmental impact awareness should become mainstream"*

These thoughts are all noble ideas however, we need to be taking action to start to change habits, behaviours and long-time shopping routines. We need to understand and connect as habitants of this one and only planet and share its resources as needed not wanted. Community engagement and conversations on media is overdue. The researcher believes that fundamental change must come from grass roots, but it will take time.

## Conclusion

From this small scale this research, the researchers concludes that all participants are aware of the environmental change. Less of the global inequality and who might grow their food and where they might come from. Everyone is aware of the carbon footprint and the distance of food transportation but less thinking of the wellbeing of who might be growing them and how much they get paid or the land they are growing. Some of the participants are aware for the Fairtrade initiative but find it expensive to buy it themselves and perhaps those below the poverty line would not be able to look at it. Every participant agreed that the way forward to the problem of the changing environment is through education in schools, developed economies educational curriculum needs to teach children

how bad we treated each other and our only planet. Campaigning, and community education. Every participant is aware that the resources sharing ratios between the global North and South are wrong and unsustainable but perhaps big obstacle for them is how to recommend a solution for this. Participants thought they should shop less and pay more to make sure growers are paid enough. Some of them are keen to buy seasonal local produce.

Removing social licensing and working to make environmental education mainstream, however long it might take, was also discussed as a way forward.

### Recommendation

From this short research with eight participants the recommendations are the following

- Environmental education needs to be taking place at all levels
- Community engagement and campaigning to change shopping habits
- Remove social licensing and work to mainstream environmental education
- Awareness of global inequality through celebration of international food
- Shop less and pay more to the growers
- The unequal sharing of resources between the developed and developing countries is not sustainable.

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## Appendix 1 Transcripts

### Interview one

So, my first question is. Do you have any of the following in your kitchen? Cupboards like coffee, tea, not sugar, bananas, chocolates, ginger red or black pepper.

I have all of them. You have all of them. Thank you very much.

So, having them around how often do you think of their origin, for example, where they come from who grows them?

Virtually never. The only one I would think most often about is maybe bananas because they have stickers on the tele. Um, so it's very visible. For example, it might tell you they've come from Costa Rica or something like that, but for the other ones, yeah, not at all. And particularly the ginger. When I read that in the list, I thought I have never thought about where my ginger comes from.

Thank you very much for this. So, having, listened to your answer, or how you responded to that, if your answer to the previous question was often, or like you say, never do these thoughts, inform your opinion on the interdependence of humanity?

Probably rather than thinking about the interdependence of humanity because of the recent campaigns, there's more thought goes towards the environmental impact of the food and the carbon footprint and how far it's travelled.

So, I'm thinking more about the environment than about the people who produce it.

Should you be or do you think that we should also think of who is growing them? What do you say?

Yeah, so I think the fair-trade movement there used to be a lot more publicity and advertising about that than there is now.

I think it's really shifted. It is a lot more about the environment, the climate, even the land than about the people. So, yeah. I used to work with some ground-up growing cooperatives in west Africa. And that was, I mean, it was something very, very fledgling. It was new. And the quality of what they were producing was poor.

Well, the global, North, of as a generalization is greedy and we have an abundance of food. And we waste a lot of food. And in the south, the global south, they face long periods of food shortages, and you know, they face, uh, quality of land that is getting worse and worse at their harvests. So poor, they've got more uncertain weather conditions, so things are getting harder and harder. Meanwhile, we're being wasteful and not even thinking about it from a global perspective.

supermarket. I've got four children, so I buy a lot, but people comment on what I buy. One man said to me, I'm glad you're not my man.

So much food. So, we're in, we have different shopping, shopping habits as well, by little and often we just stock up massively. Yeah. Great. having, discussing about this, how sustainable do you think the current global production and consumption of food is?

A Well, it's not, it's not sustainable.

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## **Interview 2**

what do you think then could be done to reduce these global inequalities in terms of food, production, and consumption at a community level?

Like what we're discussing? Um, what I think we could maybe do more about consumer expectations, because for, for me, it's like a mom of four kids.

Yeah, we're always looking for what's the greatest bargain I can get lowest prices. Whereas if I can have shifted my thinking to focus in on only buying what I need instead of the stock parents, so much stuff, and there will be less wastage and you could afford to pay more because you were buying less.

But in fact, you can buy those things all year. Now. They just don't taste as good because they've been forced production. So, it's, it's more exciting to wait for things to come into season.

We don't have that anymore because we've got everything, we want all the time. Yeah, of course.

Thank you very much. So, my last question is, do you have any suggestions to achieve a fairer world for humans, animals, and the environment.

Yeah. Um, I had a little giggle to myself when I read that question because I thought, what if I knew the answer to that I'd be running the UN or the agricultural organization or something? Well, I think it must be approached at all levels. Doesn't it? I mean, at the macro level, we've got WFP world food program and you know, these global organizations that need to have laws and guidelines that limit.

The way things are farmed, the way animals are farmed, the way that land is farmed, um, the way that there's international trading of food, food miles, carbon footprint, all of that. But then, like you say, at the local level, it's more of an advertising campaign. I think to change shopping habits takes a long time and eating habits takes a long time.

But, um, and I also, I think it would be good to link it with him. So, for our family, you know, I, I try to have lots and lots of fruit available, but the children, like things that come in packets, why should we have this process made in a factory? And it wrapped in plastic. Why not try to focus on food as it comes from the ground or from tree?

So that's about trends and educating people. I think.

Cheaper more convenient options available. I think the mindset is that's what people will go for cheaper. We do have a lovely little farmer's market where I live once a week, but I can't remember the last time I went there. We also have a lovely little greengrocer, but convenience is the highest priority for people with busy, busy lives?

## **Interview 3**

Do you have any of the following in your kitchen? Cupboards, like coffee tea, nuts, sugar bananas, chocolate, ginger, red, black papers.

B. All of them.

Having said yes. How often do you think of their origin, for example, where they grow or who might grow them?

B. Well, that's interesting. That's an interesting question. And that's variable too. I mean, I don't really think about sugar. I don't think.

Yeah. And certainly avocados. I can remember. I can remember when things like that first appeared in the supermarket.

That's one of the things about into being thinking about. Our interconnectedness, uh, not only with the food with the earth that grows the food and all the rest of it, but with the farmer, with a person who brings it to your, to wherever you get it from without, you know, so there's that kind of whole thing.

That's about that practice. And the two things kind of came together in a, about this suddenly realizing how far food travels. And, and how we should be eating much more locally. Whenever we can have stuff that's been produced locally but realizing also how varied our diet is now compared to my childhood.

So, I wouldn't dream of not having. Yeah, kind of chili peppers and ginger garlic, garlic. We have a garlic when I was a kid. That was something that I discovered probably, but I was in my twenties.

Looking at my plate and thinking about where all this came from and not just eating it, but kind of really contemplating it before and thinking about the whole thing about intervening. So those things brought up, brought it all together for me, I think quite a lot. So now I am very conscious of it. And I think about it in terms of climate change as well.

you know, when there's all this climate incidences, which mean the crops fail or the, you know, and so on. And yeah. How it's going to be very different for people who are rich, who can afford to buy stuff.

That's been airfreighted in, because there'll be less stuff that we can probably actually manufacture or grow ourselves here. And certainly, less range of food. If, if the climate is changing, um, or maybe not, maybe that's a tip, you know, maybe that's a bit of a pessimistic view and I don't know, but it all goes round in my head like that.

I think about things like the peppers, the ginger, the things that come from all these kind of far-flung places in terms of travel. Yeah. You know? Yeah. We can grow rice in Europe, and it's grown in Italy, and I tend to get locally more, you know, kind of like European grown goods because of the cause of the food miles.

## **community research focus group**

What can we do to reduce food consumption and food production and its impact on equality and environment?

What do you think we could do as a community level?

I mean, I think there's, um, I think like social, social licensing. It's an interesting idea. Um, and like, removing social license, the idea that, is that people only do things if they feel that they're socially licensed to do them. and I think like, with some things like eating, eating animal products, you're seeing it right now. like social license around that is gradually being eroded. people are feeling less and less. Okay. With just consuming animal products, thoughtlessly, without consideration. And I think maybe something similar could happen around, foods, you know, foods that are, foods where there's like a lot of their production has lots of negative implications for people in developing

countries. Removing social license to just thoughtlessly consume those products in large quantities like we do now. I don't know. I think maybe there's something interesting around that, so it could be, it could be done. Yeah. I think like, yeah.

A lot of the, a lot of what's going on with veganism, it's just happening through word of mouth. It's just people, you know, you get like a small number of people who are, very vocal and they constantly agitate for it. They talk to their friends and family about it all the time. and over time, tilt gradually sinks in, yeah.

You know, people's awareness and, and that leads to behavioural change over time. My process isn't it slow. I think it's a lot of it. A lot of it works through like pure repetition, people who already eat that way and can see them that way.

Just, um, reiterating repeatedly, exposing people they know to, you know. To facts and images and other things. And overtime, I think psych a critical mass is reached in people's awareness. And then at some point there's a, you know, they tip over into changing their behaviour and I could imagine something similar happening with these issues.

but I think the core of it is like removal of social license. Like I say, I think it's like, it's like a slow process of a behaviour gradually moving from being like fully, not just fully acceptable, but not even like considered moving from that into like, to the point where it's you know people pause for thought before they do it, it becomes like it becomes a behaviour that's up for contention.

Whereas as opposed to one, that's not even. Not even, you know, thoughts about people doing it without, without any contemplation. I think, I think, I think that should be ideally that's where you, that's where you get to with all this is these issues you've been talking about. You know not sort of outside of people's awareness, but they're kind of central to their decision-making when they, when they consume.

kinder and very inclusive behaviour.

One is accessibility of information, because a lot of like the only time you hear about fair trade and the exploitation, and it's either because you've come across a reading or because in your lecture you've heard about it or in a very academic talk.

And most of their readings are not very simplified or you have to really search it to come up. It's not very in simple terms. I know for a fact that my parents would not understand the trade concept and exploitation if they came [00:29:00] across our reading because their English isn't that great. So, I feel like accessibility of information should be simple, like a platform where the information is very simple, very straightforward that can explain it.

and it must be in a way that you don't have to go out of your way to research it. It should be very visible to you somewhere. there should be a very simple platform, even if there was like a little leaflet booklet that was mailed into the, into the letter.

A lot of people don't even know that information exists. And if they didn't know it exists, they're not really going to go out of their way to research it. So, I feel like accessibility to information and making sure that the information is simple for people to understand, especially older people who haven't gone through academics or don't know the language very well.

Thank you. On that note, we will. Absolutely be so thankful your time, everybody. I hope you enjoyed this discussion. very useful to me and I hope it useful to you too.

