Matt Eastland:
If you're listening to this podcast, chances are you care deeply about shaping a better food system. One that works not just for today, but for generations to come. The kind that EIT Food is helping to build every day through groundbreaking projects across Europe and beyond. And so for today's show we're talking to one of our own brilliant people to take a closer look at some of the great work going on across the EIT Food community and the people who are helping to deliver a better food future. So today I'm joined by Glindys Virginia Luciano
, the International and Strategic Relations Project Manager at EIT Food. So her role is central to making sure E80food's multi-stakeholder approach isn't just talk, and is reflected in the voices driving our funded projects, the coalitions we lead at major global forums, and the success stories emerging from our missions. And before joining us here at E80food, Glinda's worked with WIPAD, an international movement connecting and empowering youth in agri-food systems, and YOUNGER, the official youth and child constituency of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. And to top it all off, she's just been named as one of the top agri-food pioneers to watch by the World Food Prize Foundation. Congratulations, Glindys, and welcome back to the show.

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
Thank you so much, Matt. It's such a pleasure to be here. And thank you for such a wonderful introduction.

Matt Eastland:
Well, the pleasure's all mine. What an incredible CV. I'm always slightly inspired and a tiny bit depressed by the fact that somebody probably half my age has already achieved more in their life than I already have. Where did it all start for you? What got you into this path?

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
That's such a great question because I think about that all the time. I kind of decided at the age of 14 that I wanted to be in the global policy space. At the age of 14? Exactly, yes.

Matt Eastland:
That's where I went wrong, I think. Okay, got it.

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
No, I just kind of knew that that's what I wanted to do. I was always interested in people, in culture, in how we interact with each other. And it wasn't until I entered university, I went to Connecticut College, and there I realized I had a passion for food.

I didn't realize the importance of food when it comes to to politics, but also obviously to culture and how it shapes everything we do, really. It's so fundamental. And so that's kind of where it all started. Obviously, when you're that young, you don't really know where it's going to take you in terms of like your path, what's going to happen. I studied anthropology with a focus on food. And when I finished, I knew that I wanted to continue on the path, again, wasn't really sure where exactly it was going to land. But then I started working for different NGOs. I went to Slovenia, worked at an amazing NGO there, then started canvassing for Amnesty International. Once I finished, worked at an immigration law firm. Everything I've done has always been very people-centered. I knew that I wanted to be of service, not to just my community, but also internationally as well. And ultimately, I decided to complete a master's in agricultural development. And I started to do research there, focused on agricultural production systems in Southern African countries. And then I entered the Young Professors of Agriculture Development. So it's really been a career that's just spanned. We're across the decade already. And yeah, I feel grateful to have been able to carve out a space that's not very straightforward because it's not saying I'm going to be involved in agriculture development. It's not a very straightforward path, let's say. I, of course, got my, let's say, my introduction to the UN system actually at 18 years old, already at 19 years old, started to become involved in the youth space already at that age, and officially was employed to be able to do it when I was at WIPART, which you mentioned, the Office for Agriculture Development. And last time I was here, I talked a bit about that, so I do recommend for you guys to hear a bit more of the work that was done there. And then I entered EIT Food, where I've had the pleasure to continue that work, but more on the side of intergenerational, multi-stakeholder partnerships, still engaged in the global policy process, particularly through the UNFCCC COP. and really happy to be here and to talk a bit about what exactly that means and how the work that we do at the organization can in some ways be elevated at the global stage.

Matt Eastland:
Amazing. Wow. What an amazing career that you've had so far and I literally can't wait to see where you go next. I always struggled to know what I wanted to do and I didn't even find that out until my late 20s, early 30s. So to have that kind of vision of kind of where you wanted to go at 14 is remarkable, really. I mean, I'd love to get into the people-centered part and the EIT food activities piece. But before we do, one thing that obviously was said in the top of the show. So you've been named as one of the top agri-food pioneers to watch by the World Food Prize Foundation. And just for our listeners out there, what's the World Food Prize Foundation and how do you get nominated for something like this?

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
Ooh, that's a great question. So you probably heard of the Nobel

Prize, right? There's the Peace Prize, of course. So the World Food Prize, it's really the equivalent of that. And the foundation itself is really there to be able to support agriculture, to really create a foundation that's focused on elevating agricultural research, agricultural development. And I mean, this cohort, this is something, I'm on the second one. that I've been named to be part of the second one. And it's really been an honor to be nominated, to be part of this. If you take a look at the list, you see amazing people from across all age groups that have dedicated their lives to agriculture, to food systems in general. And it's really a pleasure to know that the work that I've been done has been recognized. My understanding is to be nominated for something like this is someone actually has to nominate you, has to, vouch for you in some ways for the work that you've done. So this is not something you apply for, but rather you are nominated for. And so I was very surprised to receive the email. I bet.

Matt Eastland:
Yeah. It's not every day that happens.

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
No, and in fact, it was so interesting because I received the email as I was coming back from the June climate meetings in Bonn, Germany. I land, I check my email and I see that I've been tapped. And so it's just a pleasure to know that the work that I've done that is recognized. I mean, we don't work in this space to necessarily be recognized for the work that we do, but it's definitely a nice indication to know that somehow it is important and it is advancing agriculture development and that it is relevant, right? That's always the question that we have, especially when we work in these kind of spaces. And is the work that I'm doing relevant? Is it actually necessary? And so it definitely was a very great surprise for that to happen.

Matt Eastland:
Wow, amazing. I mean, congratulations again. And yeah, it feels kind of feel like I'm talking to like food system royalty. It's kind of nice. So, so yeah, congrats. I mean, you spoke about kind of the relevancy and, you know, delivering impact. And I guess this is a nice segue into into the stuff that that you do for EIT food. And it's really nice for me to actually to talk to one of our own for a change to unearth all that great work. So just for our listeners, and hopefully for the people who listen a lot, you know this already, but So for some context, EIT Food is a very much mission-driven organisation. So it's not just about talking the talk, but it's very much about delivering impact. And we have three missions, and they're to guide and shape our activities as we tackle like critical environmental, health and resilience challenges facing the food system. So Glindys, I'd really like to talk to you about how your work kind of spans those missions. And maybe we can start with, I mean, it's a big one, but they all are, so net zero food system.

So when we talk about a net zero future, So often you hear from the big giants in the food system, rightly or wrongly, but I'm interested from your perspective, what role do the likes of farmers, frontline communities and young people play in co-designing food system solutions? Do you think it's enough or is there work still to be done?

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
Huh, there's always work to be done. Of course. If I mean, let's be realistic, I'm definitely an optimistic person and I do think that there's, we're moving towards a direction, whether it's the 100% complete direction, you know, that's something that's debated, but if, I mean, If the central role that youth, women and frontline communities play in farmers, I mean, of course, it's incredibly important. It is central and it cannot be done without those that, you know, we call them the most vulnerable communities or people in vulnerable situations. They are co-designing solutions. They are already involved in the space. I think it's a matter of whether those solutions are being scaled. If they're receiving, let's say, the financial piece or the investment support that is needed to scale, but those solutions are happening. I'm talking about at the ground, actual solutions, let's say, to support that CRM, perhaps even beyond that as well. That's already happening. Now, obviously, what happens on the ground, we see that in our work as well here at EIT Food, right? There's amazing work that's happening on the ground. People are moving forward with solutions. And that's the amazing thing about innovation in the first place, that you can move rapidly. And there's so many changes that can happen overnight, really. And we're seeing that, you know, with AI and all of these different things. But when we're going back into, you know, the part where I'm involved in, which is more the policy aspect or the policy piece or these processes, of course, it's a lot slower. And so co-design there for policies are a little bit different. It's a multi-stakeholder approach. And just as women, farmers and youth are important, I will also say private sector is just as important, right? We do need, and of course, decision makers in terms of government as well. We need everyone involved in order to make the progress that we need to see, because one group alone is not going to be able to do And so that is the reason why the work obviously takes a bit longer. Having dialogues and having conversations and knowing what's the right, let's say, where we can all find compromise takes time. And so I know that oftentimes we say, well, there's not enough that's being done. This is true, but it's not because people are not acting on it. It just, it takes a bit longer. And of course, again, this is why I do think that we need to continue to support work on the ground. We need to support, let's say, startups and young people in startups, because oftentimes they talk about youth and women as if they're in a different category. But if you see in the startup movements or like in on the ground engagements, a lot of them are youth and women. They're just also entrepreneurs. Right. And there are these crossed cutting identities, right? So again, if we continue to support in, let's say that investment piece, I think obviously the co-designing of

solutions goes beyond just inclusion, but actually mainstreaming. And I think that that's what we need more of essentially.

Matt Eastland:
OK, great. Thank you for that. I mean, you sort of you mentioned that there's challenge with scaling, that there's slowness in policy. I mean, are these the kind of the main problems that the barriers that these sorts of people in communities face or, you know, and can you see can you see a way through that?

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
I think there are a couple of let's say we talk a lot about challenges and it's definitely not my favorite part to talk about because I feel that We have to move beyond that, but let's just name a couple of that, right? In terms of the challenge aspects. Of course, it's finance, right? That is one big part of it. If you don't have funding to be able to support and let's say, scale up and kind of increase your engagement or like scale the projects that you're doing, that's obviously going to be an issue. But then there's also the part of, even being heard, right? The agency that you may have, let's say as a woman, as a rural woman, let's say, or as a senior, being recognized as a solution maker and not being just a beneficiary. And I think that, and I guess the challenge here is that I want to come to is the narrative piece. There's still a lot of work to be done around narrative. Are we actually looking at the current, the next generation and at women and at farmers as solution makers? Are we just seeing them as beneficiaries, let's say, of that finance, of those policies that are being created rather than as actual partners and being able to mobilize those resources that are needed or partners in the design of those policies that are going to affect them as well? I think that's perhaps still the biggest challenge I would say aside from the investments and aside from the recognition is the narrative and I think that if we continue to work on the narrative piece and I will say I feel that at EIT Food we are doing that, we are changing the narrative, we are working be our programs that support women, on our programs that support young professionals in changing that narrative of we're not beneficiaries of programs, we're not just people that are waiting for someone to help us out, but rather we are already taking the lead and we're taking the charge.

Matt Eastland:
Got it. And it's interesting you mention about having their voice heard, but somehow just being the beneficiary. Because actually, I was going to ask you a question. Do you feel that it's fine to have people have their voices heard, but then maybe these sorts of people and communities don't then become the beneficiaries of the solutions? But actually, you're kind of saying it's the reverse that actually the real challenge is first of all making sure they have a seat at the table and I guess therefore that the solution that is then delivered benefits them in the right way. Is that right?

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
Well, I'm saying that I think we've done a lot, to clarify, we've done a lot to actually get a seat at the table. That's the work that's being done, especially in the past decade, young people, women, you know, there are, if you go to a lot of these global policy for us, you're going to see a lot of young people and you're going to see farmers and you're going to see the existence of different groups. But the issue is, how do we actually view them? So it's more of, are you just seeing them as the ones that you're helping out, or rather, are they actually your partners in trying to find a solution? And what I'm saying is the challenges around them not necessarily having a seat at the table, because I feel like there's been a lot of work done in that piece, but rather, now that they have a seat at the table, are they really consider partners just as, let's say, a company that's sitting next to you or the government maker, the decision maker that's sitting next to you. I think that power dynamic and that narrative aspect, it's still something that needs to be worked out.

Matt Eastland:
I see. OK. And from what you're saying, I suppose this is why that whole piece around partnership is so important to you in the work that you do, right? Because you feel that unless you have that, you're just not going to get the right outcomes.

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
Exactly. And I mean, again, as I mentioned at the beginning, I am big on collaboration. I think that really is the way to move forward. I think it's not just about connecting people, but really what does that connection mean? What can be, what, in making those connections, what solutions and ideas you can get out of it to actually be able to tackle those challenges from a perspective of, well, What can be a challenge? How can we turn it into an opportunity, right, with the right people in the room? And that's been such an integral part of the work and why also I really appreciate the work of EIT Food because that's a big part of what we do as well for connecting people in agri-food systems. we are seeing challenges, okay, yeah, there was a challenge, but who can we actually combine together to provide the solution to that and to work on it together and to say, well, it's difficult, but we can create the space to be able to find those solutions together.

Matt Eastland:
Yeah, no, absolutely. I mean, I've always thought and found actually that when you kind of put people together who are really trying to work together for what is effectively the same outcome, you know, particularly like net zero food system, for example, that that's kind of where the magic happens. And so I fully agree with you on that. And I guess in that, I mean, have you seen or have you been

working on any great examples of this kind of cross-sector multi-stakeholder collaboration that that's actually really helping scale climate action in food systems? You mentioned you had a few examples earlier, but maybe you can throw some at us.

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
Yeah, absolutely. So for those that don't know, as you mentioned earlier, we are engaged in specifically the UNFCCC, what's called a climate COP. That's a meeting that happens every year. It's the largest climate meeting in the world where decision makers come together, where countries, parties, member states come together to essentially talk about climate, to find solutions and find compromises when it comes to how to tackle the climate crisis as a global community. And within that, over the past years, we have really focused on getting food and agriculture into the climate agenda, because agriculture, as we know, it emits 30% of greenhouse gases, comes from agriculture. We know that statistic. It's really everywhere. But we're not necessarily just a problem, but we can also be a solution. So that's been kind of like the focus around it. Within that, we've been essentially bringing the food systems community together through the engagement of pavilions. Specifically, we have the Action on Food Hub, which is a multi-stakeholder platform that engages INCOP in what's called the blue zones, so where the negotiations happen. And really, we work with actors from across the entire value chain, essentially, in food and agriculture. So that means obviously we have research institutions, we have intergovernmental organizations, private sector, and we really have taken up the role of convening just because we know that we've done that so well in our scale here in the European region, but really bringing those actors together for creating partnerships. So it's not just about going to this event and coming all together, but it's rather We started in COP 27, and over the past couple of years, we have seen how through that engagement, we've been able to leverage some of those partners together and create projects and initiatives, actually, to really bring solutions then to decision makers and say, well, this is what's already happening. This is what we can do, and this is how we can support you as well.

Matt Eastland:
Thank you, Glenn. And you know, I'm also really glad you brought up COP and something I wanted to talk to you about. And I kind of think this helps us transition a little bit, you know, from the kind of net zero food systems. And now it starts to blend more into that kind of the next mission, which is also on resilient food system, you know, sort of building the right structures and systems and processes in place to ensure that the food system can actually cope with all the various different shocks that are coming at us. I mean with regards COP specifically, I mean, you're obviously deep in this and you obviously have a real great respect for what's being done there. But do you, with COP30, for example, coming up in Brazil, do you think the global summits like this are delivering enough action on climate change, on resilient food systems, particularly in in the

space that we work in, because often for people who don't attend these things, you know, you hear a few lines about what's going on in COP, but it's never quite clear whether it's actually leading to something. Do you feel that it is really important?

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
I do think that it is important for the reason that you don't get, I mean, it's really the main opportunity of the year to be able to kind of come together as a global community and discuss such an important topic of our times on how to be able to tackle that. Now, we can also be critical of the process. A lot of people are scared sometimes to be critical, and criticism is what actually allows us to improve. Obviously, have we delivered on what has to be done? Well, no, there's 30 cops now. We're going to the 30th cop. So obviously, we haven't reached an agreement. There hasn't been, right? I mean, even since the Paris Agreement, we're not necessarily on target either. And so I do think, however, though, that it is the space in which we come to as a global community to say, well, this is still urgent. We're not letting it go. We're not letting the matter go. This is not something that disappears. Now, with COP 30, I think it's just going to be such an important COP for the reason that, number one, it will be taking place in the Amazon, essentially in Belém. That is such, and I know that that's also one of the reasons why I was chosen. We're literally going to be in the lungs of the world, of the planet, the Amazon. And I think that sometimes, especially those of us that work in the space, we might not often, while we work with people on the ground, We might sometimes disassociate a bit in terms of the people that we're serving and why we're doing what we're doing, but we're going to be in the middle of the Amazon. We're going to see actually the direct effects, for example, of the agriculture industry, of agribusinesses, of the different industries at the heart of it. And I think that that's actually very important. I think we need to bring that into focus. The climate crisis is not something that's happening far away. I mean, in Brazil alone, there was a flood last year. We're seeing, I mean, there's a tsunami alert at the moment in Hawaii. Every year in Europe, these summers are just scorching. I'm based in Rome, and it's just heatwave after heatwave, wildfires. These are not things that are just happening just because. These are direct responses of a man-made problem, really, that we've all contributed to. And so, of course, you can be critical of the process, and in fact, we should be, because we should be doing more. But this is also why it's important to show up as well. We cannot afford to sit out on major discussions around climate, on biodiversity, on desertification. If you notice, I'm not just mentioning the climate cup, but next year, we're ramping up for three cups once again for the Rio Conventions. We don't have the luxury to just say this is not important, right? Again, policy processes are one thing, but when you enter these spaces, you also realize how much is actually happening at national levels and that countries are actually in fact willing. It's just a bit trickier when you're putting 193 member states to work together. That is tricky. But it doesn't mean that as the international community, you cannot go ahead and move things

forward without necessarily reaching a global agreement.

Matt Eastland:
Yeah, absolutely. I mean, yeah, wise words, sobering in many ways. And, you know, the things that the shocks that you're pulling out are absolutely, yeah, in front of all of us. And I suppose it's great that at least that, you know, the likes of COP is there to make sure that the whole world sees it. And I mean, one of the things that I particularly have always liked about COP, and it seems to be a great platform for highlighting the voice of those kind of often underrepresented voices on that global stage, and I guess particularly with this being in Brazil, you know, how do you think that those often marginalized voices, so youth, women, indigenous people, like you say, smallholders, how can they be systematically included in shaping food policy, something I know that you're particularly skilled at. But not just from a climate perspective, but if we're talking about resilient food systems, from both a fairness, accessibility and adaptability to change piece, how can that work or do you think it works?

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
That's quite interesting. Such a great question, because that's something that obviously we discuss often. When I think about it from a more, let's say, global perspective, there are these things. So right now we're waiting on what's called a National Determined Contribution, so NDCs. These are almost like pledges that country makes. And the community has worked very hard in trying to get, let's say, food systems involved in that, like healthy diets, sustainable food production systems. To what extent that has happened? Well, I mean, some countries have included them. The ones that have come out already, we're waiting for the second, for the rest of the countries to share these NDCs. I believe it's by October we can expect them. But I do know that, let's say, the women's constituency, farmers as well, and the youth constituencies have worked very hard and also to make sure that countries are including, you know, women, youth, and small-scale farmers into these national deterrent contributions, as well as a central pillar of being able to reach the transformation that's needed. Now, At local level, how these can be mainstream. There are examples of countries that, for example, have platforms in which they invite, let's say, farmers and women and youth to be able to contribute to the policies that are being developed or let's say to projects that are being worked on to also be carried out by them. And that has proven in some ways to work very well. Now there's still work to be done, but I do think that The only reason why it's been so difficult, it's again, because we have separated these identities. So if you look at farmers, you have a lot of young farmers. If you look at private sector, you do have a lot of young and youth and women and farmers themselves are also businesses in private sector as well. So I do think that it's a matter of Sometimes we focus a lot on the identities that is important. But I think that we also need to see that in some sometimes policies are talking about, let's say, more cross-sectoral

identities where you have youth and women and let's say small scale farmers that are benefiting. It's just maybe not written that way. And I think that that's maybe the piece of work that still needs to. that needs to be done. But how it's done, I mean, you invite them to the conversations that are being had, you develop these platforms where they can actually contribute. If there's a piece of policy or legislation that's going to be proposed, there are platforms where you can share these with these groups, for example, to get their inputs. It's actually a matter of being intentional. And I think that that's the part that we also need to emphasize. Whatever we wish to do, it has to be intentional.

Matt Eastland:
And the work that you're doing at EIT Food, particularly around this space, is that the intentional piece that you're talking about?

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
Absolutely. I mean, it's quite easy to just say, OK, let's focus on those that already have things. You know, you could easily just say, OK, let's just work with these two or three players because we know that they can bring the funding to the table and things can get done. But as you're doing that, right, because, again, we've talked about that and now knowing, you know, the developments that are happening across this sector of international cooperation and international development that we have been hit hard financially due to changes in the geopolitical climate. needing the support of those champions that have the funding and the ability to invest, it's very relevant. But at the same time, we cannot forget to continue the work on being intentional and bringing everyone to the table because they do bring perspectives that do make us more resilient. And I guess that's the point that we cannot forget. Those that are on the ground obviously understand what's lacking, what's the problem, what's needed to actually be more resilient. Resilience obviously comes from being able to identify all the different critical shock points that we have, who's actually going to suffer from that, and then how can we actually create some kind of safety net and mitigation process as well to be able to be more resilient. We are not going to have a resilient food system if we don't get the perspective of our women, for example. of those small-scale farmers, of those young people that, for example, want to start, let's say, entrepreneurial activities themselves, we need those perspectives to be able to be stronger. And I think that's the part where sometimes we forget. We think that if we, you know... With just technology alone, sometimes there's a narrative that with just technologies alone or forecasting or just data, we're going to be able to be more resilient. And that is a part of it that is very important. But understanding other aspects, because we don't live in just a, we talk about the value chain, but in reality, we are a web more than anything. If we don't include all those pieces of the web, we are going to have some holes that will not make us as resilient as we could have been if we were intentional about including everyone.

Matt Eastland:
Yes, indeed. And, you know, you talk about the holes. And, you know, I think we've, you mentioned as well, but we're sort of dancing around the issue of sort of the instability in the world at the moment, the geopolitics, you know, like we said before, climate change in the news, and seeing those shocks everywhere. I mean, From your perspective, what lessons do you think we've learned from all of this? Because I mean, I guess it's very easy to look at everything and feel quite depressed about it. I mean, and I think there's a certain fatalism that goes with that thinking, but there's always positivity to it and there's always hope. So can you pull out any lessons either that you've seen or that you've specifically been involved in around this instability, which is actually therefore helping build more resilient food supply chains in Europe and globally.

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
Absolutely. So you are right that it might feel like doom and gloom during this period. And the truth is, yes, this is true in many ways, there is doom and gloom. We cannot deny that. But I think that the other part is I think we need to, and you mentioned that, the concept of adaptability. I think we somehow in this time, and I guess that's something I also think about, we kind of have to split ourselves a bit, meaning we need to continue to build the momentum of the work that's been happening on the ground and the innovations that we're able to move forward with, finding those champions and those points, those entry points that actually allow us to collaborate and to continue to move that forward because that doesn't necessarily have to change regardless of the doom and gloom. But then for the other part, I think from the other side at the same time, while we're doing that, We need to continue to plug into what's happening in policy-wise, what's happening globally, and to stay aware, to see what's going on, and to continue to view things. If this is a problem, what is the solution that I can bring forth? Who can I actually connect with? Who's doing amazing work that's trying to tackle this specific issue? Who is someone that perhaps I never thought of that could have been part of the solution, but is? And I think that now we're not in a moment of just doom and gloom. I think it's also a moment of rebirth and transformation as well. Scarcity is the mother of inventions. And while we may be, while we may actually be feeling like we're going through a moment of scarcity, perhaps also from the other caveat, what I think of, what if this is the moment that we actually now really have an opportunity to rethink the way we've been doing things? Because obviously what we're seeing is that a lot of the changes that have been going on, specifically I'm talking about, you know, aid being reconsidered, aid being pulled out of projects just completely disappearing that are really important. What if this is a moment to reconsider what actually is resilience, number one? Were the projects that were there still really relevant? Was there another way that we can bring that forward? Who can actually support us and perhaps not just close the gap, because of course that's important,

but rather look beyond the gaps, right? create something new. So again, yes, doom and gloom. Yes, continuing to follow the process and understanding what's happening. At the same time, what's the transformation that we can contribute to during these times of instability?

Matt Eastland:
Yeah, I really love the way you've turned that on its head. It's seeing it as that time for transformation. What I'm taking from this is actually this could be a really great time for driving greater efficiencies in the things that we do. pushing more people together who were maybe not collaborating as well as they could have done or needed to be introduced to each other, that really kind of this is the time where they have to work together on solutions to drive that resilience. Is that fair?

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
Absolutely. And I, you know, yesterday, as you know, I was, I've attended the UNFSS plus plus four stock take here in Addis. And the wonderful Amina Mohammed mentioned something that I just just stuck with me, which is the problems that we have are man-made, which means the solutions and the decisions and the policy are also man-made. And so there's a lot of power to that. Oftentimes we feel that our power has been taken and stripped for us. But in fact, if we see a lot of things are man-made, which means that we also need humans and man-made solutions as well to these problems. And I think that we can take inspiration in that and to think about those things during these really tough times.

Matt Eastland:
Yeah. Yes. Yes. I love it. I love it. Really good, wise words. And for our listeners there, Glindys just slipped in the fact that she's actually in Ethiopia at the moment as well. So, you know, she's fighting the good fight in all the right places. So, you know, it's great to hear. Glindys, just briefly talking about our final mission that we have at EOT Food around food for health. and particularly, again, leaning back into your kind of skillset around partnerships. Why do you think in this space, partnerships are so important in helping driving a shift towards healthier eating habits? Is it the same as the others in terms of just great collaboration? Is there something specific around healthy food choices that makes this particularly interesting?

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
That's quite interesting. Interestingly enough, we also work with a lot of partners that are super focused on sustainable, healthy diets, on nutrition. I mean, I always find that to be quite interesting because that is very much also connected to behavioral change. And while of course, let's say from a policy aspect, there's a lot that can be done, I think a big piece around that will always

be awareness. Awareness of what is healthy, on what is culturally appropriate as well. There's a lot of discussions around that. and what can actually be done to help ensure that foods remain affordable. And that's a big piece around it too. Sometimes we act as though consumers 100% have a choice. on what's available, but, you know, working in this space, we know that this is not necessarily true. Your availability of certain food choices are not really just up to you. They're not necessarily just up to, you know, whether you want them or not, but they are on, you know, depending on where you live and where you're at, what do you actually have available? And so, And also on the affordability aspect as well. And again, those are things that are related to policy. And so, again, finding the right partners that are working on those things where that's their areas of expertise, trying to make that, trying to increase that awareness on Food, again, it's not something that you just consume for the sake of consuming, to say a lie, but it is related to health. It is related on your future population as well in terms of what are the health outcomes in your country, of your population, but more specifically on the longer terms. What is the investments, you know, if you have a healthy population, They're probably going to do much better in school. They're obviously going to be able to, let's say, be more innovative because they're not thinking about the fact that they're going hungry or anything like this. So it's obviously a big part where we need to continue again. And I'm going to always just say this, see these things not just as something you pour money into, but it is an investment for the future of citizens. So again, collaboration is a big part of that, but I think more so being clear on what are the main causes of this. This is not just a consumer issue. This is actually a broader issue that needs to be tackled. And it's a bit of a difficult piece of work. But I have really enjoyed seeing the work that EIT Food has done in terms of working on that education piece, because it is very important, and the awareness piece on what you can do with the choices that you do have available. And from the work that I've done is in working with partners on trying to influence, at least with those partners that we have, on the larger issues, right? So I think there's a couple of pieces there of work. It's not necessarily my area of expertise, but I think that this is where, you know, you bring the physicians, the nutritionists and those working in those, you know, health ministries as well to come together. And that's the part, of course, that we are able to do to kind of tackle this specific part.

Matt Eastland:
For sure. For sure. As I say, you get the right people in the room and that's where the magic happens. Yeah, it's great to hear, Glyndys, and, you know, I appreciate this. This maybe isn't quite the area that you work in, but again, that consistency around partnerships is obviously key. And Glyndys, looking forward, what's next for you, if I can ask? What's your plan? I mean, looking at your CV, you're probably going to be sort of emperor of the world at some point. So what's the next step in that pathway?

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
So, what's next? That's a great question. I'm, you know, I think that if there's one thing I can learn and also as part of the lessons is that this is all very much a learning process. There's always so much to learn from people, from the new research that comes out, from the new trends that emerge. And so, What's next is just to continue to work on this, especially during these times. As I mentioned, I think that this is really a period where all of us that work in this space really have to walk in, really have to be intentional in our contributions, not to get deterred by all the noise that's happening, but rather to continue to focus, to continue to be mission-oriented, And, you know, again, I'm very grateful that I also got to contribute and to be part of this with an organization that is also mission-oriented. And so that one changed. So what will happen next is I will continue to do what I've been doing.

Matt Eastland:
All right, well, that's great to hear. And, you know, for anyone out there who's kind of been inspired by your journey, you know, from having that clarity, let's say at 14, I mean, any advice that you'd give to somebody aspiring to get into this space? What would you say? Where do you start?

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
Hmm, that's a if I think if I, you know, if I would have gotten the advice that I wish I would have gotten, you know, if I would have had a older version of me, you'd have started at seven. I would have started at seven. No, I would just say Learn as much as possible about the topic that you're interested in. Learn about the challenges. Learn about what have been the solutions that have been proposed. Continue to follow processes that you're interested in and stay focused. I think that's what it is. I think sometimes And I see that a lot when we see that things don't work out within a year. Within two, we start to lose a bit of confidence. Don't lose confidence in the area, in the thing, in the purpose that you know and you feel that you were meant to deliver. So stay on track. and there will be people rooting for you. And then more concretely, join networks, join professional networks, volunteer in the areas that you're interested in. There is so much to do in this space. There will be a lot to do still. And so it's not something, especially now, I know there's so many young people that are so nervous about walking into the space of wanting to do this career path and then realizing all these changes that have been happening. There's still room, there's a lot of room for everyone to come in. There's always the need for new ways of thinking, for new ways of doing things. And so stay on track, stay focused, and always feel free to connect with others that are interested in the same things as you.

Matt Eastland:
Love it. Love it. Thank you, Glindys. And yeah, I think that the

message around there's always space for for more passionate people is a really good one. And I think also what you're saying effectively is and it's kind of one of the expressions that I hear a lot is, you know, overnight successes take years to build. Right. It's you've got to do the hard work and you've got to put it in. But you've got to stay. You've got to stay the course, because that's that's when the successes mount. So yes, thank you for that. Glindas, this has been a joy, a pleasure to talk to you and I'm glad that we've finally managed to get this in and congratulations again on your nomination. And as I said, I can't wait to see what you do next. So please do make sure that you come back on the show in the next few years and let me know how it's going being the Emperor.

Glindys Virginia Luciano:
I'll take you up on that, Matt. And yeah, thank you so much, really, for the space. I know I'm part of EIT Food, but thank you for the space. I'm very grateful for it and very humbled by all of your kind compliments. And I'll see you in a few years.

Matt Eastland:
You certainly will. Well, hopefully before, given we work in the same organisation. But yes, you'll see me, you'll see us soon on the show as well. Glindys, thanks. Thanks once again. And thank you to everyone else out there who's been tuning into this week's episode. This has been the Food Fight podcast. If you'd like to find out more, then check out the EIT Food website at www.eitfood.eu. And please join the conversation via the hashtag EIT Food Fight on our LinkedIn channel at EIT Food. And of course, if you haven't already, please hit the follow button so you never miss an episode. Thanks everyone, speak to you soon.