



THREE INSIGHTS

HOW CAN WE PUT PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE OF CLIMATE ACTION?

CLIMATE JUSTICE / ONLINE FORUM DISCUSSION / 07 APRIL 2022

We would like to thank the following panellists and members of the **Business Fights Poverty** community for their participation:

Phil Bloomer, Director, **Business and Human Rights Resource Centre**; **Daniella Foster**, Global VP & Head, Public Affairs, Science & Sustainability, Consumer Health, **Bayer**; **Laura Kelly**, Director, **IIED**; **Amanda Kron**, Associate Expert, Climate Change and Environment, **UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**; **Richard Morgan**, Head of Government Relations, **Anglo American**; **David Taylor**, Policy Manager, **Fairtrade Foundation**; **Nina Vollmer**, Research Manager, **Global Child Forum**; **Barbara Merz**, Managing Director, **Pathfinder International**; **Emma Williams**, Sustainability Consultant, **Change By Degrees**.
Moderator: Alice Allan, Collaboration Director, **Business Fights Poverty**.

In this [online forum](#), our panellists discussed how to prevent the move to net-zero from having adverse impacts on people's human rights and how businesses can strike this balance with care. Our discussants looked at the best practices for companies committing to support climate justice, the sectors exemplifying good practice, and how technology and social media can support the involvement of those most impacted by the climate crisis.

INSIGHT 1: BEST PRACTICE FOR BUSINESS: EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY AND ELEVATING THE VOICES OF THOSE MOST AFFECTED

Our panellists agreed that companies must embed their sustainability strategy into the fabric of how their business operates. Daniella Foster said that strategy needs to be integrated across the value chain so that these programs are “a force for good and a force for growth, not just a CSR initiative.” She also stressed how the most successful strategies focus on resilience instead of short-term relief from a climate event.

The panel discussed how best practice involves elevating the voices of the most vulnerable and giving them a platform, bringing people into the conversation. “Affected communities must be able to engage with companies to collaboratively transform the business

model,” said Phil Bloomer. Nina Vollmer highlighted that children are often not considered in companies' climate strategies despite being one of the most impacted groups and having valuable insight.

INSIGHT 2: BUSINESSES ARE ENGAGING EMPLOYEES AND LEVERAGING THEIR VALUE CHAINS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

Our panellists highlighted some of the companies who are proving their commitment to climate justice.

Emma Williams said that due to the nature of their business, oil, gas, and power companies are moved to push fast, and she used the electricity company [Enel](#) as an example of good practice. “As part of their push, they will need to close thermal power stations.

They worked with unions and made a commitment to respect human rights and fair labour practices and set up apprenticeships to transfer knowledge,” she says. Hamish Taylor, a member of our community, gave the example of [INEOS Grangemouth](#), which engaged teams of young apprentices in a #FuelChange initiative. This kickstarted conversations and empowered young people to channel ideas that could reduce emissions.

David Taylor gave the example of best practice shown by [Ben & Jerry's](#), which recognised that the supply chains involved in production are characterised by high levels of poverty. Ben & Jerry's signed the [Fairtrade Business Pledge](#), committing to pay fair prices, develop long-term partnerships with farmers, and attend to their climate impact. He gave the example of one farmer cooperative which was able to install solar panels and a water pump, as well as build a medical clinic employing a nurse as a result of receiving fairtrade premiums.

Amanda Kron noted that businesses must be [accountable](#) for their climate-related human rights impacts. She cited examples of court cases brought against companies and advised companies to set up effective grievance and remediation mechanisms.

INSIGHT 3: TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA CAN PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN ENSURING THAT IMPACTED COMMUNITIES HAVE A GREATER SAY IN DECISIONS BEING MADE

Social media and technology can mobilise people around the globe, encouraging them to share, protest, and take action to find solutions for the climate crisis.

Technology means there is no excuse to not properly consult with impacted communities when governments or companies are making decisions about climate change policies. But as Laura Kelly pointed out, “care [is] needed as women are still digitally excluded—165 million fewer women than men own a mobile phone, and over 300 million fewer women than men access the internet on a mobile.”

According to Amanda Kron, technological solutions could include increasing communities' capacity to cope with climate change; improving the efficiency, accountability and transparency of supply chains; widening access to technologies; and supporting inclusive decision-making and the consent-based use of traditional knowledge in building resilience. An example given was the announcement at COP26 for a £500m deforestation fund and how policy can involve farmers as policymakers, using their knowledge and expertise to shape programs designed to deliver those funds. “Let's put them in the driving seat,” said David Taylor.

“Centring women and girls in climate solutions, you get a two-for-one benefit: more inclusive societies that are more resilient to climate.”

Barbara Merz, Pathfinder International

“The most successful strategies focus on resilience instead of short-term relief from a climate event.”

Daniella Foster, Bayer

RESOURCES SHARED:

- **Business & Human Rights Resource Centre:** [Renewable Energy & Human Rights Benchmark 2021](#)
- **IEA Report:** [World Energy Outlook 2021](#)
- **Global Child Forum Report:** [The State of Children's Rights and Business](#)
- [The Green Economy Coalition](#)
- **Business Fights Poverty Action Toolkit:** [Women and the Net Zero Economy](#)
- **World Benchmarking Alliance Report:** [2021 Just Transition Assessment](#)
- **OHCHR Report:** [Human Rights, Climate Change and Business](#)