

Jon Spooner ([00:02](#)):

Hello and welcome to Live From the Space Shed a podcast all about space and science, hosted by me, Jon Spooner, and me.

Mini Jon ([00:10](#)):

You mean me.

Jon Spooner ([00:11](#)):

Sorry. Yeah. I mean, you .

Mini Jon ([00:13](#)):

Mini Jon.

New Speaker ([00:16](#)):

Mini Jon! Long story short, a few years ago I accidentally set up my own space agency based out of the shed at the bottom of my garden. Turns out that if you go around telling people you are the Director of Human Space Flight Operations for the unlimited space agency, wearing an orange spacesuit, more people than you might think want to play along. And now the British astronaut Tim Peake, is our patron, and he took me with him to space.

Mini Jon ([00:39](#)):

He took \*me\* to space.

Jon Spooner ([00:40](#)):

Alright. He took you with him to space. So Mini Jon became UNSA's first astronaut. Woo. Since then, we've been touring in UNSA's Mobile headquarters, the Space Shed to festivals like Latitude and Blue Dot telling stories, talking to some super cool space and science people. And we've recorded our chats so you can find out about their amazing work as well.

Mini Jon ([01:08](#)):

Jon?

Jon Spooner ([01:08](#)):

Yes MJ?

Mini Jon ([01:08](#)):

What are human rights?

Jon Spooner ([01:08](#)):

Uh, oh. Uh, well, human rights, they're just the basic rights and freedoms that all people are supposed to have.

Mini Jon ([01:19](#)):

Like what?

Jon Spooner ([01:19](#)):

Uh, like, well, like the right to express your opinions, to not be tortured, to be free from slavery. The right to work, the right to live freely, basically.

Mini Jon ([01:33](#)):

Who looks after those rights?

Jon Spooner ([01:33](#)):

Who looks after those rights? Uh, well, well, we do, we all look out for each other's human rights. And then if we need them, there are laws to protect those rights.

Mini Jon ([01:42](#)):

Laws?

Jon Spooner ([01:42](#)):

Yeah laws. Do you not pay attention at school? Look, I mean, like, you have rules at school, and if you break them, you get told off. Yeah. Well, tell you what, how about we listen to the chat that I had with the lawyer and social justice activist, Harpreet Kaur Paul, who knows loads more about this than I do. Okay. Then begin systems checks. Let's launch this episode of Live from the Space Shed with the brilliant Harpreet Kaur Paul.

Jon Spooner ([02:25](#)):

Hello Coventry! Hey, you are there, right? Yeah.

Jon Spooner ([02:32](#)):

Hello, my name is Jon Jon Spooner. I am the Director of Human Space Flight Operations, obviously here at the Unlimited Space Agency. Welcome to UNSA's HQ, the Space Shed. Give it up for the Space Shed.

Jon Spooner ([02:48](#)):

Um, welcome. Uh, we are here all day today. We're telling stories and trying to save the planet a bit later today. Uh, I'm gonna be telling the story at four o'clock of I, I'll tell you a, a secret, I have actually been into space. I know, right? Yeah. You see, you're like the one person's been into space. And I'll be telling the story at four o'clock of how I did that in a little bit, uh, earlier than that. Two 30. Today we're gonna be interviewing, um, Maddie Moate, the BBC television presenter in the shed. But before then, right now, one of my favorite things about my job as Director of Human Space Flight Operations is that I get to meet loads of really interesting people, uh, lots of scientists, space scientists, often. But this summer, because there is, we're gonna talk about this a little bit, a climate emergency. We wanted to talk to some people that know about that. So this morning, joined by a researcher from the University of Warwick. She is a climate justice activist and campaigner, would you please give it up for Harpreet Kaur Paul? Harpreet welcome.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([03:56](#)):

Hi. Thank you for having me.

Jon Spooner ([03:57](#)):

Oh, it's a real, real pleasure. A genuine pleasure to have you in the shed. Thank you very much for coming in. How you feeling?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([04:04](#)):

I'm feeling good. Yeah. It's a beautiful day.

Jon Spooner ([04:06](#)):

It is a beautiful day, isn't it? And all these people as well. Um, Harpreet, I've just introduced you as a, uh, climate justice activist and campaigner. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. What's that then? <laugh>, what is it that you do?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([04:19](#)):

So, I work a lot within NGOs and outside of NGOs, um, trying to look at the systematic causes of climate change and address them through a political and ethical lens.

Jon Spooner ([04:30](#)):

Basically, you know, a load of stuff about climate change and the legal, uh, implications of what's happening to people. And you are fighting to stop the worst effects of climate change affecting the most disadvantaged people.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([04:43](#)):

Yes.

Jon Spooner ([04:44](#)):

Excellent. I'm aware that not many of you probably came out today wanting to talk about the fact that we're in a climate emergency. Um, I'm just guessing that, but it's important we think, to be talking about this because it's a really scary thing. I've got children, you've all, there's a lot of children here. It's a really scary thing that's happening right now. Um, but let's just cover off. There is a climate emergency.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([05:04](#)):

There is a climate emergency,

Jon Spooner ([05:05](#)):

Yes. Okay. Can you tell us what we mean by what you mean by climate emergency and how did we get here?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([05:11](#)):

Yeah. So I think firstly it's worth kind of differentiating between what I mean by climate justice and climate action in general. So there's a slogan in the Climate justice movement that says systems change, not climate change. And that is because we are looking at the political, social, economic cultural factors that disadvantage certain people more than others, which we say has led to the situation that we're currently in. And if we're kind of looking at a climate justice lens, and we look at what happened in France in President Emmanuel Macron's government, um, we saw a proposal to introduce a carbon tax after the president had reduced taxation from some of the wealthiest people in the country. And it led to this huge movement that was called the Yellow Vest Movement. And

Jon Spooner ([06:01](#)):

Can I just ask? Yes. What do you mean by carbon tax?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([06:03](#)):

So it was a tax that was going to be in proportion to the emissions that, um, people were paying

Jon Spooner ([06:08](#)):

For individuals.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([06:10](#)):

For individuals. Yes.

Jon Spooner ([06:11](#)):

So it would be depending how much energy you use, what sort of car you have, yes. How much carbon you are emitting into the atmosphere, you would be taxed

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([06:19](#)):

On that, except that it wasn't done proportionately. So what ended up, what it ended up meaning was that the people that were the poorest would end up paying five times more. And that's really important if you're seeing things through a climate justice lens, because 10% of people contribute 50% of CO2 emissions. They're the wealthiest people. They have multiple homes, multiple cars, um, they have all the latest tech gadgets. And if you imagine that visually, so 10% of the people in this space taking up half of the atmospheric space, leaving 90% of people with the other half. And within that 90%, the poorest people are the least responsible, but experience the worst possible impacts. And when we think about a climate emergency, um, what we are talking about is an emergency that's disproportionately impacting people that are least responsible.

Jon Spooner ([07:13](#)):

And when we talk about climate emergency, this is, um, Greta Thunberg has been particularly good on this in the last year. Well, it's been very high profile on it that in an emergency you don't say, well, let's deal with it in 20 years time. Yeah. You say, let's, let's deal with the emergency. Let's put the fire out. Right. Right. Now, if your house is on fire, don't wait to put it out. Put it out now right? And that's what

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([07:33](#)):

Yes. And it isn't on fire. And it has been on fire for a long time. We're seeing crop yields reducing water already being, becoming scarce. Um, cyclones are increasing in frequency and severity, uh, diseases spreading, sea levels rising. Um, and those that are most responsible and have the most resources to address it are from a climate justice lens actually profiting from the crisis.

Jon Spooner ([07:58](#)):

Which doesn't sound right, does it? It's a cheery subject for a Saturday afternoon family day, isn't it?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([08:05](#)):

It's a horrible subject. And it has a horrible past because, um, for a lot of climate justice activists, we, you asked the question, how did we get here? A lot of people would go back to colonialism in this and there's an author who wrote this book, the Memory We Could Be, and he describes the way nature narrates the colonial story. And I'll read a quote from this book. He says, across continents, mangroves, grasslands, rainforests and wetlands were cleared to make wafer quarries, plantations, ranches, roads, and railways. Ecocide came hand in hand with ethnocide. And I think it's really important to remember when we are talking about how we got where we are, that the British fought three wars to get access to Burmese forests. In Belgium, 10 million people, half the population, uh, in relation to Belgium colonialism, which resulted in going into places like Congo. 10 million people, half the population of the Congo at the time, um, died as the Belgian people that the state tried to get access to rubber and ivory. We've got slavery, which was directly about getting people into silver and gold mining and crop, um, various different crop plantations, vast forests being cleared for livestock and sugar. Um, all generally meant to produce things that were going flowing up to the global north. So there's a long history of inequality, and it's these same countries that experienced colonialism that are at the forefront of experiencing climate impacts as well.

Jon Spooner ([09:38](#)):

Because I often hear people say to me, you know, the UK or we here in the global north, this part of the, what some people call the Western or the developed world, um, have really benefited from this. And people say, we're doing really well at reducing our emissions, you know, the UK in part, and have people saying to me, it's not us, you know, it's the Chinese mm-hmm. <affirmative>, uh, speak to the Indians about, uh, what they're doing. And that it's like, well, we started this. It's our, we made this situation. We need to take responsibility for it.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([10:07](#)):

Yeah. And again, making those links with, um, colonisation. So colonisation saw India's economy reduced from 27% to 3%. China's reduced from 35% to 7% while Europe's increased from 20 to 60%. What that means today is that we here have the infrastructure and the resources to adapt relatively well to climate change. The same impact of sea level rise won't be felt here because of that legacy in comparison to somewhere, um, like the Cartridge Islands. Um, but it also directly funded that 20 to 60% rise in the share of the global economy, directly funded the industrial revolution. And if you're looking at greenhouse gas emissions between 1850 and 2002, early industrializers were responsible for three times as many greenhouse gas emissions than the whole of the rest of the world. To say that in a different way, 15% of people were responsible for three times as many greenhouse gas emissions and the rest of the world, which hosts 85% of the population. And when you fast forward to saying, yes, okay, India and China now are larger emitters of greenhouse gases, uh, uh, themselves, there are lots of studies which suggest that almost 50% of China's greenhouse gas emissions are in export zones, directly producing things that we are benefiting from, things that we don't actually need. So, you know, <laugh> plastic stuff that's all over our toy shops and things. So approximately 50% of Chinese things that we label as Chinese greenhouse gas emissions are in export zones, making goods ending up here that we don't actually need.

Jon Spooner ([11:47](#)):

So it's basically extremely unfair. The system at the moment that we have and the effects of this climate emergency are unfair to. And this is, I think because you, you are a researcher here now. Yes. But you didn't, you started, you came from here. You, you were a solicitor. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So you're a

lawyer representing what, what brought you to climate justice? Where did, where did that journey start for you? What was it that prompted you to want to fight for this?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([12:14](#)):

<affirmative>. Yeah. I had been representing people that had been tortured in various different places throughout the world.

Jon Spooner ([12:20](#)):

More cheeriness.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([12:21](#)):

More cheeriness. It gets worse. <laugh>, um,

Jon Spooner ([12:24](#)):

Speak to your mum about that later

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([12:26](#)):

<laugh> and decided that the culmination of the economic, political, social, cultural things that I'm talking about had meant that we're in a particular moment in time where the opportunities for future generations and the current reality for people in the global south, predominantly, you know, in places like Senegal, Malaysia, et cetera, it's so bad that this is the thing that we all need to be paying attention to.

Jon Spooner ([12:50](#)):

And cause climate, the climate emergency isn't only affecting people's, uh, what are the ways that it's affecting people? It affects other human rights. Right?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([13:00](#)):

It affects a lot of different things. So it, many of you might remember earlier this year, there was a cyclone cyclone Idai which hit, um, Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. That cyclone impacted 2 million people. People suffered from dehydration, hunger, cholera, drowning. Six weeks later, there was another cyclone, cyclone Kenneth, which is unprecedented.

Jon Spooner ([13:24](#)):

It's such a terrible name for a cyclone. It's called Kenneth.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([13:25](#)):

Kenneth <laugh>. Sounds sound very malicious.

Jon Spooner ([13:29](#)):

Doesn't do much harm.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([13:30](#)):

It's <laugh>, but it's unprecedented in human history for there to have been, or in recorded history, for there to have been two such strong cyclones to hit Mozambique. Mozambique. Um, you know, most people live on less than \$1.30 a day. 30% less than 30% of people have access to electricity. They produce something like 55 times less CO2 emissions compared to the average US citizen. And at the same time, they've had foreign loans from funded by some London banks to fund titanium coal. The agro industry enriching a number of people at the same time that the majority of people are kept very poor. And you can hear just from that one example of the impacts of the cyclones, the kind of wide array of impacts that climate change will have on access to food, to shelter, to clean water, sanitation, um, and life, uh, as well,

Jon Spooner ([14:28](#)):

Painting a pretty bleak picture for us this morning, Harpreet, which we talked about this before, but you know, it's, um, it's important, uh, to talk about this, the best way to stop feeling or to start feeling useful and not scared. So again, is to start talking about it, um, in these sorts of contexts as well. There are some ways that we can really positively and that you in particular are really, uh, positively dealing with, uh, some of these problems. Just wanna, wanna, how can, what, what you call the human rights framework mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So this idea about human rights, how can that help us to fight climate change?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([14:59](#)):

Well, when you look at human rights, you often talk about who is responsible and who should have access to a remedy. So one of the first things is to say, okay, if we're really committed to what the Paris Agreement says, which is that we want to keep global average surface temperature rise to well below two degree, two degrees, and pursue efforts to keep it below 1.5, then what that means is that countries like the US and UK used their fair share of that quota in the 1930s and 40s. So they have a responsibility to pay. So do corporations. The 2017, um, carbon major studies found that, um, 100 fossil fuel companies were responsible for something like 71% of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. That's human caused greenhouse gas emissions. And banks are funding fossil fuel companies to the tune of 1.9 trillion, um, every year, which is something that could, um, or since December, 2015, since the Paris Agreement was, um, was signed.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([16:00](#)):

And that's something which could go towards, uh, renewable energy. Instead, uh, human rights can play a role. So if we take the Typhoon Haiyan, which hit the Philippines in 2013 and caused more than 7,000 people to die, 1 million homes to be displaced, four mil, uh, 1 million homes to be damaged, 4 million people to be displaced. Um, what you saw two years later were survivors from that, uh, typhoon fisher folk who are experiencing reduced, um, fish stock and, uh, civil society coming together to say we want to hold corporations, specifically fossil fuel companies to account for impacting our basic rights to life. Water, food, sanitation, at adequate housing and self-determination. We're still awaiting for a decision in that case, but what I think it shows is a kind of a real movement. And we're seeing lots of movements with the youth climate strikes and XR and other things, but a real movement to say we need to put people on the planet before profits.

Jon Spooner ([17:04](#)):

There's, um, one of the most inspiring stories that I've heard about over this last year, um, and I'm a big fan of one of my favorite podcasts is a podcast called Mothers of Invention. But it's all about climate

justice. And they describe, um, how young people in particular, but people are using the law to sue their governments or their schools in order to say, you are impacting on my human rights and on my health. And it, those are very famous, uh, case in Holland, I think, where they were successful. And as a result, policy has to be changed in order to reduce those emissions to stop hurting their citizens.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([17:38](#)):

Yes. The agenda case and the Juliana case in the us which is still going through the courts. Um, and that is hugely positive. And I agree that legal action is really important and it's one tool. I also think that direct action and, um, taking to the streets and getting action through other means is also very important.

Jon Spooner ([17:59](#)):

Shall we highlight, uh, some, what are the opportunities that people have coming up, uh, to get involved with some of those direct actions?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([18:05](#)):

Next Friday. Yeah. There is a youth climate strike, um, which is really important to come out, support young people who will be disproportionately impacted in the future to by coming out on the street.

Jon Spooner ([18:17](#)):

And it's not just because this has been the youth climate strike. Anyone here been on the youth climate strike? Some of you. Excellent. Well done. Um, but this has been happening all this year throughout 2019. A lot of young people going out every Friday striking from school a lot. The slogan that I love, you know, if you don't act like adults, we will, um, what's the point of going to school when there's gonna be no future? The 20th Friday, the 20, is it 20th or 21st? 20th? I think it's 20th. Yeah. Friday the 20th of September. They're inviting everyone to come out and strike with them. Adults strike from your workplace or take the day off. If you don't want to strike, then use a holiday day. Go out, show solidarity with those young people. And I think if you go to [globalclimatestrike.net](http://globalclimatestrike.net), then you can find out where your, where your nearest strike is, how you can get involved, how you can support those young people. Extinction rebellion are also who, um, we've had ex some of the guys from XR in recently. Uh, they're organizing a, a big piece of global action through October as well, I think.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([19:18](#)):

Yes. And I think direct action is hugely important. You see direct action in Australia and in places around the world in at coal plants as well, which has been hugely successful in stopping, um, development of the fossil fuel industry. Um, if you are a university student, you can get your university to divest in from fossil fuels to get it to reinvest in renewable energy. Um, if you're working in your workplace, ask what your pension fund is investing in and get them to divest from fossil fuels. There's lots we can be doing.

Jon Spooner ([19:50](#)):

Which sounds like the idea of, uh, yeah, I'd love for my employer, my big organization to divest, to stop investing in those fossil fuels. Sounds a bit difficult to do.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([20:00](#)):



It's been hugely successful. So lots of universities within the UK and the US have already divested from fossil fuel, removing billions, um, in pounds from the fossil fuel industry. Um, so collective action like that is really, really important. And it works.

Jon Spooner ([20:17](#)):

It really does. Um, and, um, Harpreet has contributed we've made, cause I sometimes feel like it is really hard. Part of the reason why we're doing this big project at the moment is that I didn't really know what to do or how to do it, and everything felt really overwhelming and I met some really cool activists and they said, just do something, do the thing that you can. And then I started talking to people like you and we made a little website called Howtosavethe.earth. So howtosavethe.earth. And it has five levels, level one, which is something you can do right now. Something you can do immediately today, uh, in order to get involved through to level, uh, level three is something ideas for things that you can do with a little bit more effort this month or over the course of this year through to level five where you can dedicate your life.

Jon Spooner ([20:59](#)):

Like Harpreet, how you would dedicate your life to fighting climate justice and climate change if that's what you wanted to do. And I hope it's contributed. So there's links there for if you want to encourage your university or employer to divest, go there and you just go here, join this movement protest and this is how you do it. So it's not that difficult. Right. How do, so I've asked you this before, but what can we as individuals do that is useful? You talked about direct action, we've talked about, um, being able to pressure your employer. What else are you hot for people doing as individuals?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([21:36](#)):

I think it's really important to learn about the historic causes um, for where we are, where we are. Because without doing that, it's really easy to kind of be swayed by policy proposals that don't actually address the root causes of our problem. So I know it's, um, you know, a really boring thing to do, but I think, um, reading stuff, Naomi Klein is brilliant and stuff that she's written to,

Jon Spooner ([22:02](#)):

Uh, reading, who likes reading

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([22:04](#)):

<laugh>

Jon Spooner ([22:04](#)):

Quite a lot of people like reading. It's not boring. Let's not make those excuses reading. And you learn stuff, you know so's Yeah. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, Naomi Klein. Yes.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([22:13](#)):

Yes. She's written some brilliant stuff about how trade policies and economic systems, et cetera, all work together to create the crisis. And what we don't want is, um, solutions which say, okay, let's just change, um, current energy systems to renewable energy. Because what will continue to have is, uh, children working in mines in Congo and people working in horrible conditions in sweatshops in China, manufacturing, renewable energy, solar panels, um, will have conflict and war, except that the, the

weapons will be retrofitted for renewable energy. And so read stuff that deepens your analysis of how we've got where we are and the fact that lots of things need to change to move towards global justice, which is for us what climate justice is all about.

Jon Spooner ([22:59](#)):

Cool. Uh, which Naomi Klein would you recommend?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([23:03](#)):

Um, I really liked This Changes Everything.

Jon Spooner ([23:05](#)):

Yeah. Which is good. Yeah. I like, um, No Is Not eEnough. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, which is the one after that, I think. Yes it is. Because it feels like, it's like the, she wrote it very fast and it's, it feels to be like one of the most easily sort of readable ones. Cause they're massive books a lot of the time. Um, this changes everything is extraordinary, but No Is Not Enough was one that I thought, oh, I can give this to my kids. My kids are like teenagers. So yeah.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([23:26](#)):

And I know a lot of people talk about, you know, reducing your meat consumption, maybe just having meat once a week, buying locally, things like that. I think they're all very important things to do. I think my reluctance to go to those suggestions immediately is that for some people who are working three zero hour contract jobs and they come home, home, actually it's really fast to crack some eggs open and make an omelette for your kids. And I don't want to be part of a movement that makes them feel bad because lots of things need to change to enable a transition. And I want a movement that says, okay, where you are at, that's what you can do without kind of shaming people for not being vegan or not being able to afford to buy locally organic from, which is, you know, ideally what would happen. But we need to change the system so that things like that are available to everybody. We need to change the system so that it doesn't cost ridiculous amounts of money to use the train. <laugh>. We need to change a lot of things to get to the system that we need. And I don't want to be part of movement that goes, I don't know "argh you should be doing all of these things and you're not, so you're a bad person".

Jon Spooner ([24:28](#)):

Yeah. Me, I agree. And I think it's a really important message. We've heard a lot over the summer speaking to people like yourself about, um, not blaming the individual. It's the systems and the structural negotiation. Direct action is a really good way of doing that. You talk about feeling good as well. They're really fun, those protests. Yeah. And you meet loads of people, like-minded people. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, um, which has been, where have you been protesting?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([24:50](#)):

I have been, oh gosh, in lots of different places from in, in Mexico to London to New York, outside banks. Um, there's a big boycott Barclays campaign because Barclay's is one of the biggest banks that's supporting the fossil fuel industries. So there are a lot of organizations targeting Barclays in the uk. So I've been outside a lot of Barclays Banks, <laugh>, um, yes, too many to name <laugh>.

Jon Spooner ([25:13](#)):

We've got, again, that changing your bank account thing is a really good one. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, um, and letting them know. And again, it's, it feels like it could be a really tedious task. You'd have to, again, we've, we've got a link on the website, [howtosavethe.earth](http://howtosavethe.earth), um, which it a, there's a website that's built and you basically just click and it does it for you. So there's lots of people like yourself doing really amazing work to make it as straightforward as possible for us to have this change. Um, going to use this op, it's not often, I would say that you get the opportunity to meet, I don't, people that are experts in this sort of stuff, this slightly terrifying stuff, but also this really proactive stuff that means that we can feel better by doing things about it. Um, if anyone's got questions that they would like to ask Harpreet about climate change, climate justice, um, or anything related to it, this is your opportunity. Uh, there's a hand immediately going up. Hi,

Audience ([26:04](#)):

Hello, hello. My school wants to stop selling plastic bottles, but it makes a lot of money from selling water, not just free out of a fountain. So they wanted to explore what other products would be more recyclable, like water in a can. Is there another solution or do we just have to cut our losses? Which in education is a really serious issue as well.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([26:34](#)):

Your question really highlights what I was saying earlier, that the climate crisis isn't just about climate, it's about a lot of things. It's about austerity, which has caused foods to, uh, schools to need to make money from water <laugh>. So, you know, there's a direct link between neoliberal eco, um, economic policy and austerity that's pushing schools to do ridiculous things like that. Um, we, and, and the economic system, which says you have to make a profit. Why should, why should we have to make a profit from water? And water should be a basic right that everybody has access to. There are products, um, that you can use. I'm not the expert on what they would do. I'm the expert on kind of saying, we need to refund our schools. We need a totally different system so that schools aren't forced into that position to start off with.

Jon Spooner ([27:22](#)):

Brilliant. I'm so pleased that you've brought and because, uh, it's really easy to get stuck in those. Well what, but, uh, [theyworkforyou.com](http://theyworkforyou.com) if you're not already right to your MP's. Um, get out on the streets and protest. And one of the things we have to do is yeah, more money for schools. Why? Because we have to make, I've read something brilliant yesterday that really changed how I was thinking of saying, uh, the bottled water companies aren't making money from selling water. They're making money from selling plastic bottles. I think it's a really interesting just to talk a little shift. There you go. Well, I don't wanna, I don't wanna support that

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([27:53](#)):

<laugh> they're not making money from selling water, but they're also, you know, they're stories of Nestle kind of taking water from indigenous reserves in, in, in North America directly taking water away from people that desperately need it to be able to bottle it, to sell it to us. <laugh> and all the carbon emissions are flying it over and all of that kind of stuff. Um, absolutely ridiculous. And speaking of indigenous peoples, I just wanted to kind of recognize that the centuries of oppression and exploitation to have, to have faced the violence of colonialism, they have protected 80% of our biodiversity that's indigenous peoples directly protecting 80% of our biodiversity that we have. And they continue to, um,

be impacted by, uh, plans to open minds, plans to conserve con, um, their system, which they've protected themselves through local custom re traditional, uh, forms of knowledge.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([28:56](#)):

And we really need to be highlighting just how much, um, they've done. And I think one of the biggest things that colonialism did outside of the direct impact was to change our way of being in nature. It kind of said, if you're not exploiting people, if you're not extracting things and producing things all the time, um, what are you doing? You know, we just need to grow, grow, grow, produce, produce, produce. And it was completely in contra intervention to local indigenous cosmologies, which talked about our inseparability to nature and her and our responsibility of stewardship towards it as well. And, um, I think that helps to explain why 80% of our biodiversity is held in indigenous territories. Um, but it also means that we should be looking up struggles that they're facing and and supporting them to continue to do that when we can.

Jon Spooner ([29:48](#)):

Yeah, I agree. Um, another one of my favourite podcasts, I'm big into podcasts. Its name is Pod Save the People, which does a really brilliant job of highlighting, uh, other cases that I would just not hear about otherwise, where indigenous communities are being directly affected by corporations, by governments, uh, for the sake of profit and, and increasingly on that climate, uh, justice tip. So yeah, Pod Save The People as well. Thanks Harpreet. That answered your question pretty well, I reckon. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Just while we're there in the short term and until we manage to change the political system and, you know, we'll get the election that we deserve, won't we? Um, what products <laugh> what products could you, you thought of? Have you got any ideas for stuff that you could do instead of flogging water? No. If anyone's got any ideas, send them in on the internet. We'll give we'll, we'll, we'll, we'll crowdsource some ideas for you. Brilliant. Thank you. Uh, anyone else got a question for Harpreet?

Audience ([30:41](#)):

Um, your career sounds absolutely incredible and I was just wondering if you could give everyone who's listening like a little taste of how, how you got into that line of work. Cause to me it sounds like, well I personally feel like anything else career-wise that we're doing at the moment seems a little useless. Um, so yeah, it'd be really interesting to hear how you got into this line of work.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([31:03](#)):

Um, you know, I think the, the practical advice is, is um, you're, if you're young and at school, go and volunteer with, um, NGO's, charities, groups, grassroots groups, low carbon hubs in your local area, find out what they're doing and build up from there. The reason that I got involved in, in first in social justice activism and then later in, in kind of justice activism more broadly, um, were directly related to experiences, um, in my family. So my grandparents, um, were all born in a part of Punjab that's now in Pakistan, but then they later migrated to India after partition, um, the partition of India after the British left. And that area of Punjab through what was called the Green Revolution, um, was subjected to these horrible policies to change the way rivers flowed, to change the way to build dams, to, to kind of build, bring in Monsanto as this massive corporation that said instead of having local, traditional sustainable ways of farming, bring in these seeds that will kind of give you a massive crop for a while.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([32:15](#)):

Um, and, but then you have to buy the seeds every single year. You can't harvest them. Um, and it completely depleted the soil. It completely ruined a lot of natural ways in which the rivers used to flow, um, which had a huge impact on people. It's estimated that something like, um, two people an hour commit suicide in the state now directly as a result of these types of, um, policies. And it was, it kind of, um, illuminated me to the impacts of uh, what was called then the Green Revolution. This was going to feed lots of people but was hugely unsustainable.

Jon Spooner ([32:52](#)):

How so that's, it was basically a story. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> the who told you that story

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([32:57](#)):

Part? Partly my grandparents partly. Um, I kind of learnt about it over time as I became more interested in hearing about the stories of people that are most vulnerable to the systems that we are currently facing.

Jon Spooner ([33:14](#)):

I suppose this is where it's how I feel useful sometimes it's just the idea that by telling these stories or trying to help, uh, create spaces for other people to tell those stories that you learn about that and it becomes less about you and, uh, more about having to stand up for other people in that way as well. There's a brilliant organisation called Our Climate Voices who, uh, organisation that empowers young people from lots of different communities in the world to tell the stories about their experience and how they've been affected by climate change. And it's just really terrifying, upsetting and also really inspiring. Um, so that's another recommendation for you.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([33:53](#)):

I think it's really important to, to hear those stories. And I've, I've presented in other spaces where people have just gone, oh gosh, I don't want to hear that. You know, every day 1,300 people are leaving rural parts of Bangladesh because of salt water intrusion. It just feels like too much. I don't wanna hear about the millions of people experiencing drought and the Horn of Africa or the people in Guatemala experiencing crop failure from coffee and other things. It's just too much. And I think, um, from where we're sitting, we have an obligation to sit through that uncomfortableness <laugh> because we are not in that position. And it creates for me a responsibility to listen, to understand and say, well, what can we meaningfully do so that, um, we can improve the situation for those people, but that we don't make it worse for future generations as well.

Jon Spooner ([34:42](#)):

I wholeheartedly agree. Thanks Harpreet. Any more questions that anybody has? I dunno if you can see, I,

Audience ([34:50](#)):

I'm just gonna take step away from camera from, so I traveled to New Zealand, but cause I've got family and I'm originally from there. But I was wondering you maybe every two years or something, I wondered if you had any good sort of recommendations for carbon offset schemes. Cause I know that can be a bit of a minefield as well.

Jon Spooner ([35:07](#)):

Good question. We've not had a, how do you feel about carbon offsetting Harpreet?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([35:11](#)):

<laugh>, you, you probably have an inclination about what I'm about to say. <laugh>, um, well, you know, don't, don't fly as, for me, it's part of this, this whole like take individual action and you've heard a lot about how my preferences is for collective action for a very different system. When you say don't fly to, um, people in small island developing states in the Pacific that are experiencing, um, cyclones, they're experiencing sea level rise. They need a flight kind of, you know, to live to that. That's absolutely a necessity for people in, in those countries. And we need to have a life where we feel connected to the places we come from and the people that we love and adore. And we need ways to travel to see them that are sustainable. Um, and that's not going to, to stop. Um, there is a huge problem with carbon offset some of the conservation projects that are about saying, oh, let's protect this forest in the Congo and are in Nepal.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([36:14](#)):

Um, and they're funded by some carbon offset projects. Um, remove the local forest peoples and indigenous peoples that have protected that area very well for a long period of time from the land so that we can feel a bit better about carbon offsetting this particular journey or doing this particular thing. And I think they have been shown to be ineffective in the long term as well because, um, we need to do both. We need to protect our carbon sinks, things like forests, the biodiversity and the ocean diversity we have, but we also need to stop emitting and, um, fossil fuel companies, as I say, a hundred fossil fuel companies responsible. So something like 71%, um, the wealthiest 10% of people responsible for 50%. Um, we need to kind of fundamentally restructure these types of issues, um, that put resources with people that aren't most responsible for putting us in this situation.

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([37:16](#)):

Um, that state, state subsidies for fossil fuel companies is something like 5.3 trillion when you include indirect subsidies every year that could fund a radical shift to renewable energy tomorrow we just need to decide to do it. You know, it's estimated that less than 2 trillion is needed to get to complete renewable energy by 2050. I think we need to do it earlier. But if we're spending 5 trillion on, uh, fossil fuel subsid subsidies, subsidies every year, then we could spend more than that shift to renewable energy to create sustainable forms of transport, to, um, have housing that is responsive to changing climates, to um, have local food sources and these, you know, these structural things instead of, um, today I, you know, I talked historically about colonial uh, forest intrusion, but today when you look at stories of the Amazon and Borneo and the impact in Brazil and Indonesia of impact in, in the rainforests there, whose profiting it's soy producers, it's palm oil producers, things that are going into our burgers, our chocolates and things into everything. And you can't say stop doing that one thing or stop doing that thing cuz a lot of these things are connected and the the structure needs to change.

Jon Spooner ([38:32](#)):

And how, and just to reiterate, how do we achieve that structure change in your opinion? Harpreet?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([38:36](#)):

I think we've done it through various points in history. We've ended colonialism, we ended slavery, we ended a path. There are lots of points in, in our history where we thought things were permanent. We thought that the structures and the ways societies operated were permanent and it turned out that it

wasn't. And we can look back to those movements and take inspiration. So the, apartheid movement uses used boycotts, um, divestment and sanctions as a strategy. It used, uh, anti-colonial struggles, got thousands of people out on the street to say, this is enough. It's time for change. It's inappropriate that 5 trillion US dollars and subsidies are great to fossil fuel companies that are profiting from a climate emergency. And it needs to stop. Um, and it's possible.

Jon Spooner ([39:23](#)):

And if that's, if, if any of that resonates for you, I hope you're saying get out there protest rebel demand that change as, uh, the brilliant Greta Thunberg says, yes, you know, we have to change the politics because otherwise we are, well there are words you could use. Um, you are not gonna run away, are you?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([39:43](#)):

I'll be around.

Jon Spooner ([39:44](#)):

Yeah. So if you didn't get the opportunity to ask a question because you were feeling shy or it just didn't feel appropriate, um, for whatever reason, then uh, come over and, uh, have a chat with Harpreet after. Is there anything else you, how do we, can we keep in touch with you on any of the social medias? Are you, do you Twitter?

Harpreet Kaur Paul ([40:02](#)):

Yes. Harpreet K Paul on Twitter and add gmail.com to email me. I'm very open. Happy to have a conversation. Yeah, do what you can every not point, not one degree of global average surface. Uh, surface temperature rise means millions of people will either have or not have access to water, either have or not have access to food and shelter. And, you know, we need to stop emitting greenhouse gas emissions. And we need to ensure that those already experiencing the impacts of a one degree rise have what they need so that they can live just in sustainable lives themselves to,

Jon Spooner ([40:38](#)):

That's the end I think, basically on that note, Harpreet Kaur Paul everybody. Thank you. Harpreet is cool. MJ I agree. Really inspiring stuff there, even if some of it is quite challenging to have to listen to. But like Harpreet says, it's important we hear these stories of other people's struggles so that we can pass them on and help stop more bad things from happening in the future. I love your optimism Mini Jon. Thanks for listening to this episode. If you enjoyed it, please subscribe and share us with your friends and family. We'll be back again soon for more Live from the Space Shed.

Jon Spooner ([41:27](#)):

Live from the Space Shed is an Unlimited Theatre production with Season One brought to you in association with the Science of Technologies Facilities Council, the Cockcroft Institute, the Space and Arts Council England, with special thanks to Dr. Rob Appleby of Manchester University. Our theme music is Go! By Public Service Broadcasting used with their extremely kind permission. Our sound engineer and editor is Andy Wood, with Additional sound design by Elena Peña. This show is produced by Jon Spooner and Alice Massey. With support from our friends at StoryThings. Live from the Space Shed is an Unlimited Theatre production on behalf of the Unlimited Space Agency.

