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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

International Youth Day 2021

Bios of Webinar Participants, Moderators, and Video Interludes

DANIELA BAS

Director, Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD)

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)



Ms. Daniela Bas, of Italian nationality, is the Director of the Division for Inclusive Social Development at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs since May 2011. Political scientist with a major in International Politics, she graduated Magna Cum Laude with a dissertation on “The elimination of architectural barriers and the employment of people with physical disabilities”. She is also a certified journalist and worked for the major press, Radio, and Television networks and is also a certified multicultural/life coach. Ms. Bas’ interest has always been people-centred in the various activities, associations, and professional roles she has held. In addition to her work at the United Nations from 1986 to 1995, she held managerial roles until 2000 in the private sector in Italy. From then until 2011, before joining

UNDESA she was, inter alia, adviser for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and for the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in Italy. On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she was Board Member of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and of the Committee to Promote non-Armed and non-Violent Civil Defense of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Ms. Bas was also the special adviser to the Vice President of the European Commission (On. Frattini) on human rights, democracy, and social affairs.

BENJAMIN DAVIS

Director, Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (ESP)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)



Benjamin has extensive experience in social protection, social policies and agricultural economics. He previously served as Strategic Programme Leader, Rural Poverty Reduction and Deputy Director of the Agricultural Development Economics Division at FAO and he was team leader of the From Production to Protection (PtoP) project. He has also worked as Social Policy Advisor for the UNICEF Regional Office in Eastern and Southern Africa and as a Research and Post-Doctoral Fellow at IFPRI. He holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics and a Master’s in Public Policy from UC Berkeley.

SEGMENT - YOUTH INNOVATION FOR FOOD CONSUMPTION SOLUTIONS

LANA WEIDGENANT

**UN Food Systems Summit, Youth Vice-Chair of Shifting to Sustainable Consumption
(MODERATOR)**



Lana Weidgenant is a youth climate activist who specializes in the impact of food systems on climate change. She serves as the UN Food Systems Summit Youth Vice-Chair of Action Track 2: Shifting to Sustainable Consumption and as the Deputy Partnerships Director of Zero Hour, a youth-led climate justice organization. She is also a Real Food Systems Youth Ambassador and a campaign leader in youth-led initiatives Act4Food Act4Change and Food@COP. Lana is originally from Brazil and has studied Public Health at Johns Hopkins University.

VARUN DESHPANDE

Managing Director, The Good Food Institute India



Varun Deshpande serves as Managing Director at the Good Food Institute India, where he is focused on building the future of food by working with scientists, foundations, governments, entrepreneurs, and corporations to build the alternative protein sector across the continent. As the son of a cancer surgeon from Mumbai, Varun has been deeply immersed in healthcare and technology from a very young age. He spent several formative years studying Chemical and Biomedical Engineering at technology hub Carnegie Mellon University. He then went on to work on implementing digital health in India and the United States, helping vulnerable populations through care coordination, and a systems approach to healthcare. Varun is a leader in the effective altruism movement, which seeks to investigate and target the world's most pressing problems. Varun has been named a leading young voice for climate solutions by India Climate Collaborative, and one of India's 25 most influential young citizens by GQ. He has spoken at conferences and universities all

over the world ranging from the Indian Institutes of Technology to Harvard University, and his writing has featured in media including The Hindu, FirstPost, and The Daily Guardian. In dedicating his work to the future of food and combining his duty to human and planetary health, Varun aims to help build a more healthy, sustainable, and just global food system, particularly across the developing world.

Varun's Social Media

Twitter: [@varund7](https://twitter.com/varund7)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/varund7>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/varund7/>

The Good Food Institute India's Social Media

Twitter: [@GoodFoodIndia](https://twitter.com/GoodFoodIndia)

Instagram: [@thegoodfoodinstituteindia](https://www.instagram.com/thegoodfoodinstituteindia)

LinkedIn: [The Good Food Institute India](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-good-food-institute-india)

Facebook: [goodfoodinstituteindia/](https://www.facebook.com/goodfoodinstituteindia/)

Contact for media enquiries: india@gfi.org

KERRY BRODIE

Founder And Executive Director, Emma's Torch



Kerry Brodie is the founder and executive director of Emma's Torch. Emma's Torch is a non profit restaurant, cafe, and catering business in Brooklyn that provides culinary training and job placement services to refugees, asylees, and survivors of human trafficking. Emma's Torch was named one of Time Magazine's 100 Greatest Places in the World in 2018, and has been featured in The New Yorker, The Rachael Ray Show, The New York Times, Vogue Magazine, and others.

SHAHINI VALLIPURAM

Financial Controller, Winnow



Shahini graduated from University College London, after completing a degree in Economics and went on to become a Chartered Accountant. She started working for Winnow in 2018 and is on a mission to help clients save \$1 billion in food waste by 2025. Winnow develops Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to help chefs in large businesses like hotels, contracting caterers, casinos and cruise ships to run more profitable and sustainable kitchens by cutting food waste in half. Since its launch in 2013, Winnow has been deployed in thousands of kitchens in 45 countries globally and is saving its customers over \$42m a year by reducing food waste.

ABDULAZIZ ALMULLA

Founder and CEO, Madar Farms



Abdulaziz's interest in food security began during his time at McKinsey & Co. working extensively with Gulf Cooperation Council governments, addressing a variety of national risk challenges. A serial investor in disruptive technologies (Lyft, Indigo Ag, among others), he is dedicated to addressing the food security challenge. He dedicates time to the region's food ecosystem as a mentor at Savour Ventures, the Middle East's first accelerator focused on food. Previously a banker with HSBC, Abdulaziz holds a BA from the University of Pennsylvania and MBA from Wharton.

SEGMENT - NUTRITION EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND INEQUALITIES IN ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD

LIANNA LEVINE REISNER

President & Network Director, Plant Powered Metro New York (MODERATOR)



Lianna Levine Reisner, MSPOD, is a collaborative change specialist with a passion for building thriving, multicultural organizations and communities. She serves a dual role as President and Network Director of [Plant Powered Metro New York](#), an organization she co-founded in 2019 to empower local communities to address their health concerns through evidence-based plant-based nutrition. Lianna has served in management, fundraising, and grantmaking roles in the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. Previously, she worked as an independent coach and consultant serving UJA-Federation of New York, providing organizational change support to Jewish nonprofit organizations in the New York metropolitan area. She

also serves on the Board of Trustees of Manhattan's historic Congregation Shaare Zedek. Lianna has a Master's degree from Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management in Positive Organization Development and Change, and she holds a certificate in Plant-Based Nutrition from the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies. She lives with her family in the Upper West Side of Manhattan.

TIMO BARTHOLL

**Professor at the Department of Geography of the Fluminense Federal University (UFF),
Niterói/Brazil**

Member of the Roça! Community Collective, Maré/Rio de Janeiro/Brazil



Timo Bartholl lives and engages in local grassroots work in Maré since 2008. He works at the interface of university and community, as a Geography Professor at the Fluminense Federal University (UFF) in Niterói/Brazil and founding member of the Community Collective Roça! located in Maré/Rio de Janeiro.

Geographies in movement(s), militant investigation, favela resistance, community mobilizations related to food sovereignty/food autonomy, collective economies and geopolitics from a global south perspective are his key fields of interest. From 2017 to 2019 was local coordinator of the NutriCities Research project on food sovereignty and urban periphery.

DR. THOMAS CAMPBELL

**Assistant Professor of Family Medicine
University of Rochester**



Thomas M. Campbell II, MD is a physician, best-selling co-author of *The China Study*, researcher, and educator. He is an assistant professor of family medicine at the University of Rochester, where he is co-director of the UR Medicine/Highland Hospital Nutrition in Medicine Research Center. His experience includes creating and running novel nutrition and lifestyle-focused programs in primary care and hospital settings at the University of Rochester and working with many hundreds of patients over

time to prevent and treat illness using optimal diet and lifestyle. He is also author of *The China Study Solution* and course co-author of the extremely popular Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate offered by eCornell, Cornell University's online learning arm, and the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies. He also runs a private practice focusing on lifestyle medicine.

He is currently an investigator for two clinical trials testing the effect of plant-based nutrition on subjects with advanced type 2 diabetes as well as subjects with advanced breast cancer. He serves on the American College of Lifestyle Economic Research Consortium and the American College of Lifestyle Medicine Research Committee.

Dr. Campbell is a graduate of Cornell University and went on to get his medical degree from the University at Buffalo School of Medicine. He became board-certified in family medicine after completing residency training at the University of Rochester, Highland Hospital and is also certified in obesity medicine by the American Board of Obesity Medicine. He has published multiple papers in the scientific literature and has presented widely on the topic of plant-based nutrition. He has completed multiple marathons.

AYANNA BESSON

Public Health Doctoral Student in Epidemiology

SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, School of Public Health - Brooklyn, NY



Ayanna Besson, MPH, serves as a doctoral student in public health, with a concentration in epidemiology, at [SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University School of Public Health in Brooklyn, NY](#). Before entering her doctoral program, she received her bachelor's in Biology from Susquehanna University, followed by a master's in public health from the University of New England. She currently works as a Program Coordinator for the Special Treatment and Research (STAR) Health Center at Downstate as well. Ayanna's research interests include plant-based nutrition, type 2 diabetes prevention and intervention, and community health promotion through internships with organizations: Save Our Sexy, Inc. (SOS) and Plant Powered Metro New York (PPMNY).

Ms. Besson is currently working with principal investigator, Elizabeth P. Helzner, PhD, MS on a program evaluation of Plant Powered Metro NY's whole food plant-based (WFPB) jumpstart program at Downstate's School of Public Health. The primary goal is to increase access to WFPB nutrition education and support to underrepresented communities suffering from chronic illness. The university also recently launched an [Advanced Certificate in Climate Change and Planetary Health](#), and a student-led 'Planetary Health Club', where Laura Geer PhD, MHS is the faculty advisor.

Ms. Besson is active in the student community and currently holds positions as the Community Outreach Co-chair, SUNY Downstate's [Lifestyle Medicine Interest Group](#), a Public Health Geriatrics Teaching Fellow, member of the [Committee on Plant-Based Health and Nutrition](#), member of Plant Powered Metro NY, and member of the SPH Outcomes and Steering Committees.

SEGMENT – FOOD SYSTEMS AND PLANETARY HEALTH

VANESSA GARCÍA POLANCO

Federal Policy Director, National Young Farmers Coalition (MODERATOR)



Vanessa Garcia Polanco works with food, agriculture, climate, and sustainability stakeholders to create and strengthen sustainable and just food systems and communities with research, policy, and programmatic interventions. She advocates for sustainable agriculture policies and racial equity in agriculture for young, BIPOC, small and diverse growers as the National Young Farmers Coalition Federal Policy Director. She creates partnerships and works with networks to address systematic inequalities in our society as a board member of The Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society, the Michigan Food and Farming Systems, and Campo Alante.

She has previously worked with Food Solutions New England, US Department of Agriculture, Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems, and the Executive Office of Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. She supports international engagement and action towards sustainable food systems and climate action as the Major Group for Children and Youth Food Systems and Agriculture North America Regional Youth Focal Point and as a climate and agriculture advisor for Real Food Systems. She is a James Beard Foundation Scholar and a UN Food Systems Summit Champion. She is an alumna of Michigan State University and the University of Rhode Island.

KAREN MEINDERS

Global Sustainability Communications Leader, Corteva Agriscience



Karen Meinders is the Global Sustainability Communications Leader for Corteva Agriscience, a U.S.-based, global-scale agricultural input company providing seed, digital and crop protection products to farmers. She has held communications leadership roles at the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, American Heart Association, Bayer, and Nationwide. Karen holds a bachelor's degree in public relations and a Master's of Communications Leadership from Drake University. She, her husband, and their three teenage sons reside on a small-acre farm outside of Des Moines, Iowa

JOANNA WAGNER

Community Building Coordinator, Planetary Health Alliance



Joanna Wagner is a Community Building Coordinator with the Planetary Health Alliance, where she provides administrative and communications support for all aspects of PHA's programs. Before joining the team at the Planetary Health Alliance, Joanna graduated from Boston University's Kilachand Honors College with a degree in International Relations and Environmental Analysis & Policy. During her undergraduate career, she served as the Digital Media Lead for Rocky Mountain Institute, and interned with organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund, Rocky Mountain Institute, Habitat for Humanity, and the Fund for the Public Interest. She also served as a communications intern for Boston University's Sustainability Department, and as Secretary General for the 18th annual Boston Invitational Model United Nations Conference. Joanna is

especially interested in how planetary health encompasses topics such as climate change, public infrastructure, policy, and public health. In her spare time, you can likely find Joanna experimenting with new vegetarian recipes, reading, and pursuing her MLA in Sustainability Studies through Harvard's Extension School.

DR. COURTNEY HOWARD

Past-President of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE)



Dr. Courtney Howard is an Emergency Physician in Yellowknives Dene Territory, a Clinical Associate Professor in the Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary, a Community Research Fellow in Planetary Health at the Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research, and Past-President of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE).

Dr. Howard has researched menstrual cups and wildfires, and led policy work and advocacy regarding ecoanxiety, movement-building, active transport, plant-rich diets, divestment, carbon pricing, coal phase-out, hydraulic fracturing and with regards to Canada's Oil Sands. She led the 2017-2019 *Lancet* Countdown on Health and Climate Change Briefings for Canadian Policymakers and was the 2018 International Policy Director for the *Lancet* Countdown.

As Co-chair of advocacy for the WHO-Civil Society Working Group on Climate Change and Health, Dr. Howard helped to launch a global healthy recovery initiative asking G20 leaders to focus on low-carbon investments, which gained the support of two-thirds of the world's healthcare professionals. She sits on the boards of the Canadian Medical Association, Health in Harmony, and the Global Climate and Health Alliance, as well as the

Steering Committee of the Planetary Health Alliance, and the Editorial Advisory Boards of the *Lancet* Planetary Health and the Journal of Climate Change and Health.

When not engaged in planetary health nerdiness, Dr. Howard can often be found with her two daughters, dancing on the shores of Great Slave Lake.

DR. JAMES STINSON

Postdoctoral Fellow, Planetary Health and Education/ Dahdaleh Institute of Global Health Research/ Young Lives Research Lab, Faculty of Education, York University, Canada



Dr. James Stinson is a Postdoctoral Fellow in Planetary Health and Education at York University, Ontario, Canada/ He is cross-appointed to the Dahdaleh Institute of Global Health Research and the Young Lives Research Lab in the Faculty of Education. Dr. Stinson's research is focused on human-environment relations and linkages between human and environmental health and wellbeing. Much of his research has focused on the management of national parks and protected areas in Canada and Latin America, and the participation of Indigenous Peoples in nature conservation. He is currently working on two collaborative projects with the Bagida'waad Alliance, an Indigenous environmental organization founded by fishing families of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation. One project, titled *New Journey to Save Fish*, aims to promote youth engagement in Planetary Health research and advocacy through the medium of participatory filmmaking. The goal is to engage and train Indigenous youth in documentary film making to generate and share knowledge about their experiences of climate change with policy makers and the general public. A second project, titled the *Planetary Health Partnership*, aims to promote the reciprocal well-being of Indigenous youth and the environment by supporting and facilitating their participation in land-based learning and environmental stewardship activities.

SEGMENT - INDIGENOUS YOUTH AND FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

MALACHI JOHNSON

**Gooreng Gooreng Clan, TUMRA Project Manager, Darumbal Enterprises
(MODERATOR)**



I am Gooreng Gooreng and South Sea Island descendant. My clan Gooreng Gooreng people are from the Port Curtis and Coral Coast region on the Great Barrier Reef. I am a proud Gooreng Gooreng with obligation and responsibility to my traditional land and sea country that stretches from Gladstone to Burrum Heads within the Southernmost part of the Great Barrier Reef, Queensland. Looking after my land and sea country fuels my passion to keep it protected and culturally significant for future generations, supporting my continued connection to sea country and traditional uses. As a young Gooreng Gooreng man, I have been proactive towards

addressing many issues facing our people, in regard to connection to land and sea; Indigenous leadership; knowledge of Traditional Owners, their land and sea country and protocols. I have experienced the struggles and opportunities that Aboriginal youth face on Country and would like to share my knowledge about living and being on Country (land/sea) to help inspire our youth to be our leaders of tomorrow. I care about making sure we have developed pathways for our youth to look after and learn about land and sea country, including plants, animals that empower connection for our youth.

I am developing my leadership skills by working with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation to help design a healthy water program and work on the Strong Peoples Strong Country Monitoring Program. Also, I am the Traditional Owner Member for the Crown of Thorns Starfish Control Innovation (CCIP) Steering Committee of the Great Barrier Reef foundation and my current role as the Darumbal TUMRA Project Manager under the direct supervision and mentorship of Mr. Malcolm Mann who is the GBRMPA IRAC Chairman, Business Development Manager of Darumbal Enterprises Pty Ltd and Director of the Darumbal People Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC.

NUTDANAI TRAKANSUPHAKON

Co-founder and Owner of Little Farm in Big Forest, Thailand



Nutdanai is co-founder and owner of Little Farm in Big Forest, Thailand and belongs to Karen, Thailand. He has a particular interest in traditional knowledge and customary use of rotational farming/shifting cultivation, and has engaged in public education and communication around this to improve public and government understanding of this cultivation system. Nutdanai established the “Indigenous slow food youth network” in Thailand, in close coordination with other international networks, including the Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Biodiversity Network, and Terra Madre slow food in Turin Italy. Through this, Nutdanai has been able to train young indigenous people in Thailand and engage others more generally in the Slow Food movement.

IDA MORÉN STRØMSØ

Focal Point for Indigenous Youth and Food Security, FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit



Ms. Ida Morén Strømso is responsible for initiatives relating to Indigenous Youth in the FAO Indigenous Peoples Unit, such as the preparation for the Global Indigenous Youth Forum, the preparation of publications on Indigenous Youth as well as policy and advocacy work. She holds a Bachelor of Science in International Environment and Development Studies from the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, and as well as studies from the University of York and University of Havana. Her academic work has been focused on protection of genetic diversity and seeds in Indigenous communities in Guatemala, and she is currently completing her Master’s degree in Social

Anthropology and Political Economy from the University of Oslo, focused on Norwegian seed policies. Before joining FAO, Ida worked for the Permanent Representation of Norway to FAO, IFAD and WFP. Further, she has extensive experience from Norwegian civil society organizations, working with international agriculture, youth participation and policy coherence for sustainable development. She also held a seat in the Policy Coherence Forum of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on behalf of all Norwegian youth and children's organizations.

MAI THIN YU MON

Indigenous UN Food Systems Summit Champion, Director of the Indigenous Peoples Development Program of the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) and Focal Point for the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus in Asia



Mai Thin Yu Mon is an indigenous rights activist from Chin community in Myanmar. She is the Program Director of Indigenous Peoples Development Program at the Chin Human Rights Organization. She represents indigenous youth at the Executive Council of Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact. Since 2016, she has also served as the Asia focal person for Global Indigenous Youth Caucus. She has been working with indigenous communities in Myanmar and Asia for the past several years, strengthening platforms for indigenous youths and indigenous women across the continent.

VIDEO INTERLUDES PRESENTED BY:

ALPHA SENNON

Founder, WHYFARM, Trinidad and Tobago



Alpha grew up on a crop and livestock farm in Trinidad and Tobago and studied agribusiness at University. Alpha founded WHYFARM (We Help You-th Farm) – a nonprofit organization working to make the agricultural sector an attractive, viable option for youth. This is done using agri-edutainment (agricultural education and entertainment) to teach about the importance of food and nutrition security. To assist in this process WHYFARM invented the first superhero for food and nutrition security in the world, AGRIman.

DR. KATE TILLECZEK

Professor and Canada Research Chair

Director, Young Lives Research Laboratory (YLRL), York University Canada



Kate is a grandmother, educator, full Professor and Canada Research Chair in *Youth, Education & Global Good* at York University. She is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Kate is the Director of the [Young Lives Research Laboratory \(YLRL\)](#) which she founded in 2009 to create a unique intergenerational space within and beyond the university to understand, research, support and work *with/by/for* young people and their communities as they navigate local/global challenges to their wellbeing in the Anthropocene (such as ecological degradation, digital technology, social injustice). Kate's work crosses the fields of Planetary Health and

Social Science (youth studies and education) as she helps to record, engage, animate and support the work that youth are doing. Currently, she is working with her team on several youth-centred projects including the Wekimun School Project, Planetary Health Film Lab, Rights for Children and Youth in the Americas, Rooted and Rising Youth Climate Justice Leadership Project, and Youth in the Digital Age Project. Her team is developing a Partnership for Youth and Planetary Health. (Please see the YLRL website for descriptions).

OLAWALE, ROTIMI OPEYEMI

Founder/CEO JR Farms Africa



Olawale, Rotimi Opeyemi is a leading African *agric entrepreneur and recognised young leader in Africa's agricultural sector*. He has previously addressed numerous global audiences at high-level meetings focused on thematic issues such as youth employment, rural development, and the need for investment in rural economies based in Africa, as well as issues pertaining to food security.

He is the founder and CEO of JR Farms Limited, a leading agribusiness determined to transform African agriculture by undertaking opportunities for growth and business that will engender sustainable food production and increase incomes for farmers. JR Farms has agribusiness operations in Nigeria, Rwanda, Zambia and the Netherlands, offering services in staple food processing, agro-commodity trading and consultancy services. JR Farms has created jobs for many young people, improved the standard of living for farmers, and contributed to food security. Over the years, Olawale has continued to develop innovations that support youth employment in agriculture and food security in Africa. Some of his initiatives include the recently launched Green Agribusiness Fund in partnership and supported by FAO. This initiative aims to invest in youth-led agribusinesses as part of an effort to raise the next-gen of agrarian leaders in Africa. He mentors several young agripreneurs in Ghana, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Zambia, Rwanda, and Uganda among other parts of Africa. He is a guest lecturer at the Executive

Agribusiness Management Programme of Lagos Business School. Olawale is currently pursuing an Executive MBA in Food in Agriculture at the Wageningen University/TIA while holding a certificate in Agribusiness Management from Lagos Business School.

HAOWA BELLO

CEO & Founder of Fula Farms and Madame Coquette



Haowa is the CEO and founder of Fula Farms, one of the few dairy farms in Lagos, Nigeria, that supplies small businesses and individuals with fresh milk and locally produced cheese. The farm works with families in small clusters and has recently set up a cooperative. Fula Farms is fully committed to supporting and promoting rural women and youth in their economic empowerment. With her background rooted in economics, besides being the CEO and founder of Fula Farms, Haowa has also pursued her passion in fashion and handbags by founding Madame Coquette. Madame Coquette is a line of

meticulously handcrafted handbags and small leather goods made in Nigeria and sold globally. They promote the minimal use of machinery and encourage local artisans to use their traditional tools and techniques.