

Handpicked Presents: Voicing Change

Season 4, Episode 6: Team reflections on podcasting for social change

Featuring: Enock Mac'Ouma, Andres Kathunzi, Olga Millicent Awuor, Dr. Eve Nimmo, Brenda Rotter, Laureen Silva, Dr. Alessandra de Carvalho, Renata Kempf, and Dr. Andrew Spring

Transcript

Speakers

CS: Charlie Spring

LY: Laine Young

AS: Andrew Spring

EN: Eve Nimmo

LS: Laureen Silva

OA: Olga Millicent Awuor

EM: Enock Mac'Ouma

BR: Brenda Rotter

RK: Renata Kempf

AK: Andres Kathunzi

AD: Alessandra de Carvalho

{[intro music]}

AK: But we need to see ourselves as point of where the voices change. Not in terms of them taking in a different identity that we do not want, but actually seeing that the world is full of variety, not only of people, not only of cultures, not only of, ways of being and life, but all these ways of being alive matter and are relevant and also need to be included.

BR: I found it's extremely powerful to learn something from the voice of the person who teaches. To listen to the experience by their voice. So when I hear Olga and Andres talking about their community, I learned so much. And when I hear Charlie or Laine talk about the technical parts of the building this projects, it's impossible not to see the energy we put in this project because we believe in this and we build it together.

LY: Hi and welcome to another episode of Handpicked: Stories from the Field. I'm Laine Young.

CS: -And I'm Charlie Spring. In this season of Handpicked, we've been sharing episodes from the Voicing Change podcasting project.

LY: And what are we talking about today?

CS: Well, today's actually our last episode!

LY: Oh! That's too bad, I've really been enjoying this season.

CS: Me too- it's been a long journey to get to this point, but I think today will be a really good way to tie everything together! So, in this recording, we sat down with members of the Voicing Change team from all three regions to reflect on what voicing change means to us in the context of having been part of an academic Community of Practice. Today you'll hear from our team: Andrew and myself based in Canada, Mac, Andres, and Olga in Kenya, and our Brazil team which includes Eve, Brenda, Laureen, Alessandra, and Renata.

This is a rich discussion and we really wanted to leave it mostly unedited, so today's episode will be a little longer than the rest of this season. Themes discussed by the team include our thoughts on participatory podcasting as a multi-sited methodology, and how podcasting can be used to bridge gaps between researchers and communities. Team members asked probing questions about what it means to communicate and to empathize across lines of difference, and to really feel heard when you want to be understood- and when you have a problem that needs addressing.

So how as podcasters do we co-construct meaning, and attempt to amplify others' voices, often in a context of uneven power relations? Today's episode was a chance for us to reflect on some of these questions and to share the learning we've achieved through nearly 3 years of co-developing the Voicing Change project, and we hope it gives you some ideas for how podcasting can be used in your own scholarship and in your advocacy for fairer food systems.

{[music]}

CS: We're recording a roundtable conversation about what voicing change has meant to us. Particularly in light of the experience of being part of an academic community of practice. Andres, would you like to speak for a few minutes about some of the experiences you've had and what 'voicing change' means to you?

AK: Yeah. I'll be happy to do that. Thank you. Charlie. So, if I can remember from the time I joined in on Voicing Change, I think that was 2022. And, well, the level I was in academically at that point, I can say that, being in, the Voicing Change project and also engaging with all these academics worldwide, and also having a platform to share ideas and to hear other people's perspective on the same ideas has really helped me build confidence academically, has helped me grow critical thinking skills where I can actually try to kind of take all these perspectives and kind of try to triangulate what all these perspectives, when combined, would mean.

If I go back to my background in communications and trying to, to see how communication goes beyond all these contexts that are usually very common within my Kenyan context, where people

usually look at communication, well, in terms of media or in terms of media-tisation or what we mean by how the media influences societies and how media influences individuals. But actually, going beyond the field of communication in terms of its relationality. And what I mean by that is how are we looking at communication beyond its ideal goal of, passing or disseminating information, but actually looking at why is this information we are trying to pass relevant, and how is this information constructed, or how is the meaning in this information we are trying to share, formulated. And being part of Voicing Change and been part of this academic Community of Practice has taught me how to think about that.

So, for example, through our collaborative podcasting sessions where we are collaborating in scripting, we are collaborating in the thinking of the idea of, you know, what would go in a podcast, actually, teaches us or teaches me in terms of my background in communication that there are ways that meaning can be constructed- in a way it builds individuals within the communication, the communicative action or whatever the communicative activity is. And going beyond and seeing how this meaning could build or could lead to social change. In a nutshell, that would be my, the most significant thing I have gained as an academic in my field to actually think of my field differently and to see how far and beyond would I go in my conceptualization of ideas in action.

CS: That's great. Would you be able to talk about the question you posed of what it means to be heard? And why is it important for people to feel heard?

AK: Yeah. So that question came to my mind from me thinking of...So if we look at communication in terms of relationality, or we are looking at communication in terms of not passing information, but actually building relationships, and cooperation for social change. The idea of being heard was meant to stir up thoughts around, uh how do we envision other people beyond us, embodying our own experiences?

And what I mean by that is. How do I make people see and feel that my problems are worth considering and my problems are worth addressing? Being heard means not only this perception of trying to get this other person to change in order for them to meet my own needs, but actually me, introspectively seeing that this other person, in whatever context it is that we are in. So, and especially when we are looking at conflicting interests and ideas- we could call this conflicting idea, simply a conflict. And when we are looking at a conflict, what we are usually trying to do is thinking of ways of not exacerbating the conflict, but thinking of ways of how we can collaborate to solve the problem. One of these ways of collaborating in the process of being heard is actually not only saying that I have needs, but also saying that my counterpart has needs. And whatever they are doing that is conflicting with my needs is also important for them.

So the question is, how do I envision or how do I contextualize my needs and my problems into this other person's perspective? So, for example, let's say I'm a farmer and I have problems with accessing farming inputs and resources. And the other counterpart I'm trying to communicate with is the government and, probably, I feel that the government isn't supportive, isn't catering for my needs, that is either subsidizing farming inputs in order for me to be able to access, them affordably. Being heard in this context would mean me going back, and actually asking myself. Why would the government not want to support me? Is it that because they hate farmers or they

hate me in particular, or they do not want to help poor people? Or is it because, the nation or the local government has issues with, with accessing funds in order to fund all these projects? And when actually when I'm saying this, it seems like, not very many people would fall deep into this introspection and where they ask themselves questions on how they themselves are contributing to the problems within the system that they exist in. So, most people usually only see their own sides.

So, what I'm trying to capture here by being heard is, it doesn't mean that we are the only people who experience problems, but other people also experience problems, and we need to also to contextualize those problems. And we need to also contextualize their needs within our needs and therefore in order for us to form a cohesive partnership of collaboration, where we can both see the best way in mitigating or solving the problems that we are experiencing in. So, I hope that has made sense Charlie.

CS: Thanks, Andres. I sprung that question on you, so I really appreciate those thoughts. And it reminds me that perhaps, at a time where there's a lot of conflict in the world, that radical empathy is needed more than ever. Thanks, Andres. Let's move on. Brenda, could you tell us what you've learned from being part of this project, and reflect on what voicing change means to you?

BR: Bom eu acho que participar do projeto do Vicentini foi uma lente...

Well, I think that participating in the Voicing Change project was like seeing through different lenses, a very important change of perspective. I think that in our local research, here in Brazil we have built a very strong academic community, but also very closed in a way, always talking among ourselves and having our doubts just among us. So, I think that from my academic perspective, participating in Voicing Change has increased this range of possibilities and conversation and information too, and especially I believe a bit like of what Andres said, that this trust in research and in us, and in the work we do and in the issues we have been working on it together as academics. My experience with research is just academic, I don't have an experience in the field, so for me, participating in Voicing Change meant that many issues were expanded in a very positive way. Especially regarding to this exchange with people who have the same perspective as me and my colleagues from Brazil and who have the same ethical and academic perspective as me and my colleagues.

When I first heard this question, "What does voice mean to you?" my answer was about culture. I immediately think about culture, because and I would like to reinforce what I said before, I believe that, here, we are from different countries, but we have a focus on some main themes, like agroecology for example. And whenever we talk about agroecology, we are talking about this topic, although academically, from different cultures. I think this is one of the strengths of Voicing Change in comparison to like different projects that we have like in the field and with farmers, because even though we have specific themes, we are still talking about culture and this exchange of culture and in what way we can like share it with each other.

For me, always within Voicing Change, there is a challenge of how to communicate, how to make this cultural bridge in a way that is coherent and respectful, but especially how to be honest

to what we see in the field. So, I think it is extremely important that cultural aspects are always very central, because I believe that that is the challenge that the project will always have to face.

So for me to learn about the culture of Kenya has been an amazing experience as a researcher, but also to be a researcher trying to communicate a local culture of my country has been very, very important. I think that the Voicing Change project has a sensibility to bringing up these cultural issues and that is something very important in a work that has a perspective like this one.

About the "Change" part of Voicing Change, I was just talking about how in Portuguese the translation sometimes is a little flawed, because for us it almost seems like a disruptive change. But for us change would like be an adaptation, an observation and the understanding of this exchange between different realities, different cultural realities, especially towards food systems, which for me has always been a huge learning experience.

CS: Perhaps if we could move to Lauren?

LS: Well, I believe that one of the biggest problems of Brazilian universities is their distance from the community. Even if their research is about the community, there are rare cases where feedback is provided where the community actually learns about their research, then they experience them. This has always been an issue that I have personally, so it's to try to find an access that's connected the community of the community, in academia. I think the VC meets this proposal.

As I mentioned it in the questionnaire, I had a habit of consuming podcasts, but I had never worked with anything similar. Not even with oral history like you scholars. Making a podcast has been more difficult than I imagined. Especially when it comes to the ethical limits of manipulation of speech. As for the limits of the project. I found that a problem we need to deal with is the difficulty of these meta- research truths who really matter here in Brazil? Which are the farmers. We do not have data of the consumption of this type of material by farmers. Here perhaps some different type of intervention is needed with the use of community radio stations. Acho que é isso.

EN: Muito obrigada Lauren, Você quer para complementar alguma coisa em português? Ficou muito bom.

LS: Então tem o detalhe também que abrindo estava comentando ...

So there is also the detail that I was commenting on that I think that the literal translation to Portuguese continues to be a problem regarding the issue of the name "Voicing Change", because I think that the idea that we Brazilians have in Portuguese, is that change necessarily means something that is a transition and not necessarily that there is an expansion of this voice. But as it is, is that the objective of the project? Perhaps the change may involve some kind of manipulation of an idea. And I imagine that it could be something that has a negative impact. Not in the project in general, but in how it will be perceived by people. But this is a detail that we need to be careful. We need to think a little more about this.

CS: Thanks. Laureen. I think Brenda and you had both mentioned this, that actually Voicing Change made it sound as though you want to change people's voices rather than amplifying perhaps the changes that people are making or the changes that people are experiencing.

And I love what you said about, I think it was the ethical limits of manipulating speech and how, as academics, we often do that in our writing. You know, we listen to people, we take interviews, and then sometimes we take quotes or we interpret what they've said, and we might fit it into our theoretical framework. And we're sort of changing voices. We're changing their voices, perhaps in the in the more negative way that you mentioned. And I really hope that this project has given us, at least a method for trying to question ourselves doing that and a way to actually share voices in ways that we can't manipulate so much. But I think that's a really important and big part of what this project is trying to grapple with.

Thank you so much for sharing those really important points and the point about the distance between universities and communities as well. Even though we say we want to help communities and we want to speak on behalf of communities, often there is that real communicative gap. And that, you know, I think there's still work to be done on thinking about whether podcasting is the right methodology for closing that gap.

So Andrew, if there's anything that you wanted to add at this point that you think might be helpful for our conversation in terms of some of the things you said before about what you feel have been the real benefits of Voicing Change as a project, and about the academic community of practice.

AS: A lot of the benefits that we've seen, as part of this community of practice has really been. Yeah, voices of the masters students and the young professionals who have kind of come in and added their voices to our meetings and, and our processes and the research.

You know, we struggled with a few things because we all came at things differently. We all had different backgrounds. We all had different experiences. And I think it's the process of learning from each other, and listening to each other's voices, that I think we really, I guess hit our stride, later on. You know, it's taken a while to get to this point where, you know, folks who may have been quiet in the first year or so of this project are now using their voice and challenging us to think about new things in a new ways.

And just watching how these different perspectives have changed, not only the approaches of the team, but I reflect on how it, how it changes my approaches as well, to research because I think, I think these, some of these new voices brought different perspectives and really kind of challenged us to, ensure we're including, voices that aren't represented at the table. I reflect on that a lot as part of this process.

And so I'm, I'm often very grateful for this, this meeting in particular because I think we've seen a lot of, a lot of the voices, on our team really being amplified, over the past few years together and really pushing us into different directions and deepened our understanding of participatory research, of food systems work or just really kind of the language that we use, because I think we've really been challenged to think of our processes and make them more inclusive because

we're not just dealing with the communities that we know, and have a lot of experience with, but we're dealing with communities that we don't know, and listening to what works there. And some of the methodologies that other folks, or other kind of groups in different places around the world find effective or find appropriate for their kind of communities of practice.

So, it's been a really interesting journey, for me as part of this as well, because we've seen all these perspectives, and we've, I think we've done a good job. And, you know, as a team to set the table and create this really kind of supportive environment for, you know, some of the new generation of researchers to, to think critically about some of our processes and, and really challenge and move forward. Particularly in, in kind of, food systems work and community engagement.

CS: I was going to try and ask you a question about whether you'd whether anything had surprised you about the role of the academic community of practice or the way that's worked or any sort of big differences in your expectations of how you thought that that would operate?

AS: So what I was surprised in this academic, community of practice, is the, gosh, just the depth of the conversations that we've had. I think we've all reflected on maybe how slow this process is and has been, because we're constantly reflecting on what we are doing and what our role is. We came to this saying, oh, we're all participatory researchers. And then we really started to question what that meant. I think the challenge has been to actually kind of walk the talk of what it means to be participatory. And I think we all brought a little bit of something different to the table. And so, it's meant that we've, especially in the early days, yeah, it was, you know, a bit of a slog sometimes. Right? I remember, we just had difficulty agreeing on language and agreeing on how processes worked. I think we struggled because we all kind of came at it a little bit differently. And I just think that over time, and just having this constant forum to have these discussions, I think we've really kind of worked on that language and, really a lot of it it's really kind of, yeah, evolved to the place that we now kind of understand what the process is, and I think we've all bought into it.

And I think we, we do understand that good participatory work, not only in our communities, but, you know, as more of the academic team just kind of takes time. But I think we're at the point now where I think we're being rewarded by all that time we invested, in those early days, right. So, we had a lot of tough conversations, and I think we're kind of reaping the rewards from it now. You know, a couple years into it. Right? And it's one of those things, it's kind of a shame because I feel like we're just kind of getting started. So, hopefully we can find ways of continuing this conversation because I think it's been very valuable to all of us who have been involved.

CS: Thank you, Andrew. Yeah. I think that point about language is important. We've gone backwards and forwards on "is agroecology the framework we want to use?" But, and Lauren made the point that, you know, even the name of the project doesn't literally translate in the same way to Portuguese!

So, there are some things that will always be a little bit lost in translation. But I do think I agree that we have tried to work on the shared understanding piece, and trying to come back to make sure that everyone's understandings of things are heard and thought about, even though that

means that it has taken a lot of time. Thank you Andrew. Okay. So perhaps we could move on to Olga. Would you be able to share some thoughts on your experience of being part of this community of practice and this project Voicing Change?

OA: Sure Charlie, thank you very much for giving me this time to discuss my experience throughout the journey that I've had with Voicing Change. I want to begin by saying that, where we come from, Migori County, we have a lot of people who mine gold. We have a lot of gold mining going around, and sometimes somebody can be having gold right in his compound, but struggling with life and cannot afford the basic needs of his household. And this I can relate this to what has happened to me in Voicing Change. Like what I know and what I came up with is that this knowledge is just where we are. Sometimes we struggle to get knowledge very far away, not thinking that this knowledge that we are looking for is at our doorstep. And so, this is my experience with Voicing Change thus far.

As a communicator and as a radio journalist, the experience has really broadened the way in which I look at things today. Having, thinking about their people, sometimes we would think that knowledge lies with the offices of the government. Sometimes we think that knowledge lies with the big people in the society, not just realizing that knowledge lies with people that are around us back at home. People that are just our neighbours. There's a lot of knowledge that is lying among farmers. And the, my journey in in Voicing Change create that as an opportunity for me to see that there's a lot of knowledge lying with farmers just where we are in regards to understanding the food system in Migori County, for instance.

Having this experience right now, of course, we were able to encounter different voices bringing them on board to have podcast with them. We had people like Caleb and so many other farmers that we encountered with during this journey. The food sustainability or food security in Migori County, that aspect of hunger and malnourishment, that knowledge lies just within the community. In as much as the government is struggling to find out the roots and the root cause of hunger, food insecurity in the country, but we leave behind the fact that knowledge lies within the farmers back at home. And so the journey of Voicing Change has, changed the way in which I think and changed the way in which I look at things and changed the way in which I can also package knowledge and share to the people.

Going back to podcasting- because I've done a lot of podcasts before or even before this program and after this program, of course, the way I used to do podcasting before this program was like a no, no, no. I think I don't have a lot of experience in this, coming to scripting. Scripting was not a thing for me. We do think about an idea, and then there we go. We go and record a podcast. But at the end of the day we realize that there is nothing much that we captured in that particular podcast. We would miss the very point that we'd like to pass to the audience. Coming to Voicing Change has matured me and giving me a different direction in which I look and package my podcast. In this sense, we sit down as a group of people or as a community of practice, and then we get a concept, script it down, we narrate, we voice it, edit it together again, and then we disseminate it for audience to analyze it. And then the way in which we, the content that is involved in the podcast, the people that are involved with the podcast, remember right now, we engage the people that have knowledge, there at home. Sometimes, people struggled to understand somebody who is far away from them. For instance, if you want to get an officer

from the government to come and talk to a farmer, the relationship would not really augur well, with an officer from the government, talking to the farmer on a particular subject, for instance. But now when you bring a farmer on board and this farmer is knowledgeable, and then this farmer talks to another farmer on issues pertaining a particular way of farming that message is well received with other farmers too.

CS: I really like that point about the trust issue that you brought up, Olga. I think it's something that you've been able to do in a way that we've not been able to do in Canada because of your existing networks with the community radio and your contact with farmers. And you made me think about, you know, whose responsibility is it sometimes to protect farmers or put in place policies that can affect farmers' livelihoods? And, you know, often that is the government.

But as you say on an individual level, a government agent telling a farmer what they need to do isn't always going to be well received. So how can we nourish some of these peer to peer, farmer to farmer networks in ways that can bolster their resilience, but also perhaps make them better able to ask for what they deserve from government and be able to speak to government in more collective ways. I think perhaps that's something that's been happening in Brazil as well with, with agroecology for a long time. Even it would be great to hear from you any reflections you've had on what Voicing Change means to you in the context of having been part of an academic community of practice with this project?

EN: I think I would echo a lot of what Andrew has already, said about how much we have learned as a group. And I think that when we first started this project, and Andrew came to me and suggested that we put together a project about podcasts, I was like, sure, that sounds great. We can do that. That's easy. We already work with communities, we can definitely make this work! But I don't think any of us really had any idea how, how complicated, first of all, it is to make podcasts, how technical it is, how much preparation needs to go into it. And as Andrew said, and we've already discussed, I guess, the ethical implications of doing this kind of research and in always being aware of our position as academics in, working in communities, and what that means in terms of power dynamics and what that means in terms of, valuing knowledge, and a range of other things.

And like Andrew said, the long build up that it took to get to the point of actually here in Brazil, being able to record podcasts and do some of the work that we set out to do to document these voices and document these experiences, I think was really, really fundamental to, to a lot of us here in Brazil. And unfortunately, we've had people come and go within this project. And I think that everyone who's here now, at the end kind of as we're coming to the end, has learned so much and been able to share so much of their own experiences and expand so much, on the work that they're doing individually and as a group.

And those conversations that we had about, recognizing our voices or how we "use"- and you know that word is kind of loaded again with meaning- how we use the voices of others to produce these kind of things have to be deconstructed, and they have to be considered, and weighed because there is a lot of responsibility. And I think that that's something that, as community-based research, we always have known it to be a responsibility. But I think when you put it into a format like a podcast, you're creating a media, you're creating a thing that can have

implications, locally, regionally, perhaps nationally and internationally. I think we all felt the responsibility and weight of that responsibility. And it's one thing to record an interview, an oral history interview with a farmer and that recording goes into a secure location where it's where it's kept, in perpetuity for use for academic purposes. But it never becomes necessarily the voice of that person, in the public, right, and so it's a very different way of using the information that we gather as researchers. I think that this has been an incredible learning curve for all of us.

And I've particularly enjoyed these conversations that we've had with the academic community of practice, because I have learned a lot. And I think that it's very clear that everyone has grown through this process. And so, I think about the conversations that Brenda, Laureen, Alessandra, Renata and I have here in Brazil, and the theoretical depth that we have now is much, much greater than we did four years ago. And I think about what the conversations that we have with Andres and Olga that are always so enlightening. And because there's space to listen to and hear those different perspectives and think about different ways of looking at what we're doing that is so important to the research that we're doing.

So, what Voicing Change means to me means, I that I don't want this project to end, actually, I would really like for it to continue! And so I think that it has definitely influenced the things that we have done, and we will do over the next several years. And I think that can be said for everyone who's part of this community of practice.

CS: Thank you. Eve. It's one of my feelings is that there's so much more we can do. But hopefully, you know, the skills that we've learned and the insights that we've gained will, we can take to, our other projects and who knows how this project will take on new dimensions.

CS: You know, Eve, what you said, it reminds me that I think sometimes as individual researchers, we can feel that our voice doesn't matter or that 'what are we doing'? You know, sometimes when we do interviews and I this you reminded me of my PhD and doing all of these interviews that never that kind of went into my thesis, but actually could have probably had a different impact if I'd been able to turn them into some kind of public conversation. But all of the assumptions with it, oh, these are confidential interviews that have to stay locked up. And there's something slightly wrong there, and I think this project has maybe helped academia have a conversation with journalism a little bit. I sometimes think journalism doesn't always have the strongest ethical principles about how it elicits information from people and how it protects people's identities and stuff. So I almost feel like it's been an interesting, coming together of the worlds of journalism and academic research. How about you Alessandra?

AD: To work at the university as you know is something very ambiguous. I love the classroom, the interaction with my research partners, the guidance work with my students, I love studying, reading and writing, but there is the bureaucratic side that consumes us, especially when we are in a coordination situation like mine at the moment. So, taking part in the project in this way, a bit inside, a bit outside, was a challenge for me, but also a great learning experience.

The first difficulty for me was to better understand the format of podcasts. That's because I've been interviewing people for many years, but always using the methodology of oral history and in recent years more specifically environmental oral history, which most of the time involves long interviews in which we try to produce meaning from the present for the stories lived and

narrated by the interviewees. But the timing of podcasts is different, the objective also, so following the whole discussion on how to do it, listening to the experiences of those who have been doing it for so long was enriching. Although I have academic links with other research groups, being part of this Community of Practice was very rewarding, above all because of the participation of our students.

I am very proud of each one of them, but seeing the dedication of Brenda, Laureen and Murilo in the research we do here in the region, and being with them in an international academic community of practice is priceless, as a famous Brazilian advertisement says. Renata has made an incredible contribution, not to mention Ana, who has been a fundamental link in our relationship with the farmers. And Eve and Andre who are partners in our already long trajectory of research and struggle that has been, despite the difficulties, very happy and productive.

Over all, I think Voicing Change was a project that not only enabled us to learn how to use a communication tool, which will help us to amplify the voices of our partners in the countryside and who have dedicated their lives to agroecological and sustainable practices, but also connected minds and hearts in this approach, makes more and more sense to me.

Without empathy, as Andres said, without affection, I would add, the academic world is a place that can easily make us ill. I increasingly think that we academics need to find ways of communicating the production of scientific knowledge that touches people's hearts, because only then we will achieve a real process of reflection and change.

And I have no doubt that the whole team comes out of this experience different, knowing a little more about the communities we work with and with our sensitivities heightened. For which, I'm very, very grateful to all of you!

CS: Thanks Alessandra. Mac, do you have anything to add?

EM: My experience largely is drawn from the fact that Voicing Change as a project has exposed me to a wider regional and a more robust global network. Working with partners from Brazil and working with partners from Canada has injected new knowledge, new horizons into my thinking and into my perception of things as regards research, as regards managing massive global project and networking with a view to-- getting to understand how folks do their thing in different parts of the world and merging all these together to bring change in each of the regions that Voicing Change as a project represents.

And what Voicing Change means to me is coming together, having a discussion with farmers, with a community of practice, such as community radio organizations, such as non-governmental organizations working in the food sector. And working with organizations that are concerned with issues related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. And so Voicing Change means a lot in terms of how do all these organizations and stakeholders engage in robust discussions, and how do these robust discussions translate into a big collective voice on how sustainability can be enhanced, not just in Kenya, but in all the three regions where Voicing Change is implemented.

And so, what does change mean to me? Change means a lot of things, but specifically in the context of Voicing Change as a project, change means the tangible outputs and the outcomes and the impacts that the project has after the years of hard work. The impact, the positive change that is realized and felt by the local people of Migori County and beyond. The new experiences, the new ideas, the new thoughts. Innovations, such as co-creation of podcasts on agricultural issues,

such as the use and reliance on traditional or indigenous knowledge to support research, and to publish outcomes.

Voicing Change for me is about now going out there with all the innovations, with all the new knowledge, with all the new insights and voicing it out there for everyone else that wasn't participating directly or indirectly in the project to have a feel and have a taste. Of what new stuff, what outcomes this project has been able to generate over the years. It's not enough in my opinion to work hard for years, innovate, create, make podcasts, come up with, you know, new ways of farming, responding to climate change, and then fail to voice it out there for communities in need, for individuals in need, for organizations in need, to tap into it and make good use of it.

CS: Thanks Mac. Renata, what about you?

RK: It has been a very interesting experience. I have had some, some experience with interdisciplinary research and also with international research. However, the way we do things in this project, I think it takes these exchanges to another level. We're like trying to create dialogs between researchers from different areas, areas of study, but also with communities from different countries, which is very challenging. And definitely what makes the experiences so, so interesting and so enriching.

To me, I think there's a difficulty, because my main research method has always been ethnography. So, I have this, this need to, to be close to the farmers and to be in the field to be able to understand something. And in this sense, working on a project with partners from different countries and different scenarios and cultures that I don't know when I don't understand and trying to make sense of it and trying to understand it without being able to be there face to face, having to understand it throughout the eyes and the lenses of another researcher, it is it is very interesting and very challenging!

I think in the sense of the challenges too, I think we have, another thing that makes it a little bit harder because we have a concern that the podcasts and the project in general, reflects what the interlocutors, what our interviewees are saying and what they are going through, and we have this fear of losing things in translation. We have a lot of languages between us. So, there are a lot of translations going on. And this is something that makes us spend a lot of time discussing things and talking about things. Things that in a different project definitely would not be discussed or, not be discussed so long. And here, we are always questioning every word and thinking about these little details to make sure that that we are, bringing to the project the correct thing and trying to be, to be honest with the people that are a part of the project and the people that we are translating for and the voices that we are trying to to amplify. And it takes more time, definitely. But I think that's, that's the one thing that makes this project so interesting and so different from other projects and so fun to be part of.

CS: Thanks Renata. I was thinking about that question that Andres posed about what it means to be heard, and I was thinking that in intimate relationships and friendships, I quite often feel heard. But I don't often feel, I think, politically heard, even academically heard. I think we can go to a conference and have people listen to what we say, or we can write a paper and put it out into

the world. But quite often we feel like we're on our own, which is one of the things that the community of practice has done is to, is to take us away from that sense, perhaps, of isolation, which is one of the hallmarks of academia, certainly in light of the pandemic.

I think that one of the issues with us not feeling politically heard is that there's a real tribalism in the world around who believes what and what is your perception of this issue? And then we've created communities, particularly in the in the internet era, where we don't often speak across boundaries, where people might think different things. And I live somewhere where there's a lot of denial about climate change, for example, a lot of people just don't think it's a problem. And there's this assumption where I live that everyone kind of thinks the same as you. And so, I don't often feel free to speak what I believe. And then I'm often listening to people with this assumption of what they believe. And so, I'm not really listening to them either.

So I think what Andres said about the empathy that's required to try and understand the perspective that someone else is coming from, it's really difficult, in real life, and I'm not sure that we've managed quite in our podcast process to try and wrestle with some of these issues of communicating across lines of real difference. But I think even opening up some of these themes of let's not take communication for granted, let's not take what it means to voice something for granted. Let's actually think about what that means. That's like a real gift. And I think it's something that the world needs as well. Is to. Yeah, think a little bit more deeply about language and words. And the contexts in which people can exchange, knowledge and thoughts and opinions and desires and needs.

{[music]}

CS: And thank you for listening to this episode, and this season, of Voicing Change. To learn more about the project and the people and organizations involved, do check out the links in the show notes for each episode. This final episode featured me, Charlie Spring, Enock Mac'Ouma, Andres Kathunzi, Olga Millicent Awuor, Eve Nimmo, Brenda Rotter, Laureen Silva, Alessandra de Carvalho, Renata Kempf, and Andrew Spring.

Editing and sound design were by Narayan Subramoniam and our music is composed by Ali Razmi.

Voicing Change is produced with support from the Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems, Wilfrid Laurier University, the Centre for International Governance Innovation, and the Balsillie School of International Affairs.

{[music]}