Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems Podcast Series
Episode Outline
S5 – Women & Sustainability
Organized by: LY

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| **LY Narration** | Hi everyone, and welcome back to another episode of *Handpicked: Stories from the Field* with Laine Young and Charlie Spring.<br><br>I'm really excited to share today's episode with you. We're taking you behind the scenes of a special event hosted in March 2024 by Dr. Alison Blay-Palmer and Jane Clause at the Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems, held in celebration of International Women's Day.<br><br>The event, *Women, Food, & Sustainability*, brought together women leaders and researchers working across food systems, including Dr. Andrea Brown, Carla Johnston, and myself.<br><br>Each speaker approaches the topic from a different angle, but a common theme runs through the discussion: gender justice in food systems cannot be separated from other forms of inequality. Throughout the conversation, gender is linked to migration, Indigenous governance, power, place, and lived experience.<br><br>This episode also asks some big and rather timely questions: How can research be more gender-diverse and inclusive? What does it mean to be reflexive as women researchers working across different places, cultures, and |

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| | histories? And what are the stakes of these conversations right now, as food insecurity deepens in regions affected by conflict and crisis, such as South Sudan and parts of southern Africa, where famine and displacement are shaping everyday realities?<br><br>In this episode, you'll hear highlights from each of our presentations, followed by a more reflective conversation that brings these perspectives into dialogue. Together, we explore how feminist research shapes food systems, the roles women play as leaders and knowledge holders, and where this work could take us in the future.<br><br>While we can't share the entire event today, we'll bring you some of its most powerful moments. You'll also find additional resources in the show notes. And if you'd like a deeper dive into my own research in Quito, Ecuador, you can head back to Season 2.<br><br>So, let's get started. First, you'll hear from Dr. Alison Blay-Palmer, who opens the event and then we will hear from each speaker.<br><br>Here's Alison… |
| | **Alison Blay-Palmer**<br><br>As the UNESCO Chair on Food, Biodiversity and Sustainability Studies. I'm really delighted to moderate this panel with our project coordinator, Jane Clause, in the spirit of International Women's Day. We celebrate and recognize the achievements of women, including trans women, gender diverse women and girls in Canada as part of our work through the UNESCO chair. We're committed to eliminate structural impediments to gender equity.<br><br>And with this in mind and in this spirit, this panel showcases community-based research in support of women in their communities in the Northwest Territories, Quito, Ecuador and Kampala, Uganda. This work is an inspiring look at some of the initiatives being undertaken at Laurier by women researchers who raise critical issues linked to poverty, community empowerment and policy, and how all of these can be more gender sensitive. |

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| | We have three amazing speakers with us today, and it's going to be great to hear about their research and also to engage with them about their thinking, both about themselves as, as researchers and also the work that they're doing. |
| **LY Narration** | To begin our discussion today, you'll hear from me! Most of you already know me, but for those of you who are newer to the podcast, I'll give a quick introduction.<br><br>I recently completed my PhD at Wilfrid Laurier University in Geography and Environmental Studies, and I'm currently a Research Associate with the Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems. At this panel event, I shared insights from my dissertation research, which uses an intersectional feminist lens to examine urban agriculture projects in Quito, Ecuador.<br><br>We've mentioned intersectionality a few times on *Handpicked*, but because it comes up repeatedly in today's conversation, I want to take a moment to ground us in what the term means.<br><br>Intersectionality is a framework that helps us understand how different aspects of a person's identity, such as gender, race, class, Indigeneity, migration status, sexuality, and ability, to name a few, intersect and overlap to shape lived experience.<br><br>Rather than treating these identities as separate or additive, intersectionality highlights how systems of power and inequality, like colonialism, racism, patriarchy, and capitalism, work together to produce distinct forms of advantage and marginalization.<br><br>In the context of food systems research, an intersectional approach helps us see how access to food, land, resources, and decision-making is shaped by these overlapping structures, and why one-size-fits-all solutions often fall short.<br><br>With that as a starting point, here's what I shared at the event |
| | **Laine Young** |

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| | So, I'm talking a little bit about my research today. My project is called “Reimagining Urban Agriculture Research with Intersectionality in Quito, Ecuador”. So, my case study for, this project was in Quito. With the AGRUPAR participatory urban agriculture project.<br><br>And I just wanted to mention, I think, something that's really critical to my research, is reflexivity and positionality. It's important, as a Western white researcher doing research in the global South, in this research, I was very much considered an outsider, which inevitably, impacted the results of my project. So, it had positive and negative effects to the process. And I was just, endeavored to be mindful of it throughout, just kind of tried to keep it front of mind as I went through the process and analyzed my data and all, but, the only way I could get this done was through my, my insider connection. And so that was my community partner, Alexandra Rodriguez. She's responsible for the AGRUPAR project. She's a champion for urban agriculture. Urban agriculture and food systems change in Quito in her community, but also globally. Without her partnership in this, I the project would not have been possible. So, she's a someone with incredible familiarity to the project and to the participants. She was able to share the trust that she's gained over 20 years, with me. And without her, it just it wouldn't have happened. So just wanted to acknowledge.<br><br>Okay, so just a little bit about AGRUPAR . It began in 2002. It's, participatory urban agriculture project, and it's housed in the municipality. Underneath in the agency for Economic Production, or it's called Conquito. The project itself provides technical assistance, infrastructure development, access to micro-credit loans, capacity building, entrepreneurship support, support with marketing and promotion. and also does agroecological research to help promote the practices. They basically provide support for vulnerable folks in Quito to begin to grow their own food for consumption, but also for, to sell, to increase their, household income. They also ran markets throughout the city. There used to be 15. Covid has, brought that number down a bit, but hopefully, they can repopulate. But, these markets are called Bioferias and they're throughout the city where, food that is grown through the project can be sold. So it also brings that healthy, organic local food to, to people that live in the city. And there's also a bunch of collectives of farmers where they can really work together.<br><br>And I also just wanted to mention also, that this project's involved in a lot of international networks. Like I mentioned, the RUAF Foundation partnership, the Milan urban food policy pact in the city region, food systems, partner cities network. And this partnership has really led the way to the development of an agrifood strategy in Quito. This came about in 2018. It's actually the first municipal food policy in, Ecuador. And one of the coolest things about this to happen during my research is really to see how urban agriculture in the city really led to the development of food policy, which is really incredible. And they've also brought food, urban agriculture into all of |

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| | the disaster resilience, policies as well in the city. And they've won some international awards in 2018. AGRUPAR won the Future Policy Silver award from the World Future Council. And in 2020, they won an Urban Food Policy Pact award for food protection production in for AGRUPAR's use of urban agriculture to respond to the Covid 19 crisis. So, they are linked, and really like affecting change, globally.<br><br>When I was thinking about intersecting categories, I looked at some of the unique experiences of AGRUPAR participants, and also some of the potential structural issues that can affect their participant based on their social location. I used a multilevel analysis to look at how different levels of government, relate, in urban agriculture and how they have the capacity to sort of leave their silos and make some more room for urban agriculture. And then of course, thinking about, time and space, how, the interest in support for urban agriculture projects can shift and change and how we need to adapt to these changes. And then, diversity of knowledges. So again, thinking about how. Knowledge production where knowledge production comes from. Where. What? What, knowledges are privileged in society? And then, of course, I focus on valuing more non-dominant sources of knowledge, intersectional research needs a social justice and equity, element and then also looking at resistance and resilience. So of course, thinking about how urban agriculture is important to the resilience of the city and also how AGRUPAR participants themselves really take their empowerment into their own hands, and work to resist sort of these dominant paradigms and, challenge the existing structures and systems.<br><br>Okay. And then I again, won't go too much into detailed results, but, what I found was, this incredible story and picture of how, this, really started very small project in the city really led to so much, change and development of food policy, and really affected things globally. I feel confident to say, I think intersectionality is imperative to urban agriculture research from my findings, and that this specific model works really well for data analysis when it comes to ensuring that your research has an intersectional analysis. |
| **LY Narration** | And now we will hear from Carla, a specialist in community based participatory action research and Indigenous rights and food systems governance from the local to global scale. Carla has ten years of experience in political advocacy, community level planning and policy development in the Northwest Territories, Canada and has also done work at the United Nations.<br><br>Here's Carla. |
| | **Carla Johnston** |

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| | Hi, everyone. I'm Carla Johnston. I'm a PhD candidate at the Balsillie School of International Affairs. Working with Doctor Allison Blay-Palmer and Doctor Andrew Spring, who lead the Laurier Center for Sustainable Food Systems and the Northern Food Systems Research Group. I'm really looking forward to talking with you today about the different case studies of my dissertation research, which explores two questions.<br><br>The first is how my Indigenous research partners Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation and Sambaa K'e First Nation in the Northwest Territories use global food governance processes, such as those from the UN Committee on World Food Security to support their self-determined needs and goals. And second, how more indigenous peoples like my research partners, can have, influence in global food governance processes through connections with the global scale.<br><br>I do want to start off, here by saying that I don't use a specific, gender specific approach in my research. And so I have a lot to learn from scholars like Laine and Andrea. Because I did end up actually engaging with quite a bit of gendered knowledge, in my research. And specifically, this was, the I engaged with the, knowledge around berry picking, of mostly indigenous women from, from Sambaa K'e First Nation and Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation. I'm also going to be, speaking about the recent negotiations at the Committee on World Food Security for the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women and girls empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition. And, bringing some, links between those two spaces.<br><br>So as part of the Northern Food Systems Research Group, we seek to take a different approach than conventional research. By basing our research on the self-determined needs and goals of our indigenous partners.<br><br>So to dive into some of the work that has happened, in the different case studies, in terms of my work with Sambaa K'e First Nation, we've been talking one of the major things that came out of the climate change adaptation process was that both Sambaa K'e First Nation and Ka'a'gee Tu First Nation identified agriculture as one of the ways they would like to adapt to climate change. And this is because they are seeing significant changes to the land. As the climate warms, for example, for Sambaa K'e First Nation, the trout that were once abundant in their lake, which is aptly named Trout Lake, have decreased drastically because the waters in the lake are warming and trout are a cold water fish. And so, they want to augment, their traditional food system with agriculture. But they want to do it in a way, that respects the traditional food system, is another way to connect with the land. And also decreases the reliance on store bought food. They're looking for ways to practice agriculture in a way that respects the lands and waters. And they also want to work with their traditional knowledge and Dene way of life within, agriculture. |

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| | And this these, guiding principles that we heard from the community, seem to fit quite well with the framework of agroecology, which is a holistic paradigm of agriculture that values traditional knowledge and participatory research, agricultural practices that work with ecosystems, bounded economic considerations, context, specific social dynamics, and supportive governance processes. And so at the same time that we were working with both KTFN and SKFN, I was also following the agroecology process at the CFS. And we were able to benefit from the knowledge that was being produced and curated at the global level. And being able to transfer that to the local level, where we were able to see how agroecology could potentially fit with the local context.<br><br>And so, one of the ways that we worked to contextualize these kind of global frameworks of agroecology, was connecting in with the practice of berry picking. I worked together with my community partners to co-design interview questions — How do you care for the land when picking berries? How did your grandmothers do this? And then how can we, care for the land in the garden? And so these interview questions engaged with Berry picking knowledge to ground the conversation in Dene knowledge and then apply it to agriculture. These were some really fun interviews. And one of the interesting findings was that most members see, food from the bush like berries and food from the garden as quite similar because they're coming from the same land.<br><br>In terms of my work with, with KTFN. And this also engaged quite significantly with varied knowledge. In this community. And this was a project that was related to adapting to climate change, including the increased risk of wildfire. Through an idea called a firebreak food forest. So to briefly explain, a firebreak is this large area around a community that basically clears the trees, around a community ~~similar to what you see in the bottom, picture.~~ And this is, a way this is a space for, fire management to be able to control fires, when they're fighting them, as well as to create a fuel break. So it's a few less trees in the way of a fire to hopefully help to slow down a fire as it's approaching a community. And so the idea of a firebreak food forest is that this firebreak doesn't have to be just cleared land, but it can also help to meet a community's food systems needs through multiple different ways in the cleared area of the firebreak. This can be used for sustainable agriculture. This is kind of a firebreak farm of sorts. Second, the forest that edges the firebreak, can be used for agroforestry, which integrates grown foods, within the forest canopy. And then third, by working with community members, firebreaks can also act as a connection, to trails and trap lines for improved access into the forest for hunting, trapping, and gathering.<br><br>We held a community based workshop in Kakisa, last year where we use participatory methods to discuss with community members their questions, concerns and ideas and visions for this firebreak project. And there was quite a bit of excitement, related to growing traditional berries in the firebreak, largely because, this area that, is currently |

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| | the place of the firebreak was once a very large berry patch. But a fire in 2014, damaged many of those berry, plants. And now there's this large firebreak, area. And so this firebreak is maybe an opportunity to regrow some of those berry plants. And it's also seen as a space, where community members have, easier access to be able to come and plant berries. And one of the pieces that kind of came out of this project was that this was also an opportunity to support gendered, climate change adaptation, with increased forest fires that are caused by climate change in the north. Oftentimes berry patches are, damaged quite significantly. And this is a, bit different than some of the, occurrences that happened for men in the, the territories where, hunting and fishing and trapping, the animals get to move away from the fire. If a fire, destroys berry plants, then they aren't able to escape those fires. And so being able to replant and transplant berries is a way to help support some of those, women's based practices of picking berries.<br><br>And lastly, I want to turn, to the CFS, the UN Committee on World Food Security, to talk about their recently, drafted voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women's and girls empowerment. These were just adopted last year, with a very intense negotiation process. And there's a few highlights, and really good aspects of these guidelines, as well as some drawbacks as well that I highlight here. The some of the opportunities from these guidelines include a very strong focus on gender equality as being fundamental for human rights, especially, the right to food. There's also strong recognition of discrimination as worsening food insecurity and the recognition of women's agency in food systems and their autonomy. Some of the drawbacks, of these, guidelines are that, the intersectional lens, intersectionality was really watered down throughout the negotiation process. So there's less focus on kind of intersectionality and more strictly kind of on a gendered focus. And then the other drawback, of these guidelines is that the principle of free, prior and informed consent, that is, integral to the UN declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, was not included within these guidelines. It was actually specifically excluded. And so, this is quite significant for indigenous peoples around the world, but it also seems to kind of. To undermine some of the other principles of the guidelines. So recognizing, women's agency and autonomy, if they're not able to have free prior and informed consent, then this help, this undermines, that principle.<br><br>And so to conclude here, I want to kind of connect these three different case studies together. And so what I see here is that I think that there's a lesson, from the local level for the global arena and that is that, indigenous rights and gender equality, particularly paying attention to the specific experiences and knowledges of the women must go hand in hand, to fulfill the right to food. So there are things that can be learned from the experiences at the local level, and work that's happening at the local level, and being able to apply that at the global scale. |
| **LY Narration** | And finally, we hear from Dr. Andrea Brown is an associate professor of political science and women and gender studies at Laurier. |

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| | Her research focuses on the nexus between urban food security with sustainable development, gender migration and governance, and the multi-level policy environments supporting anti-poverty measures in East Africa. Her current research projects looks at the Food security of mixed migrants in Kampala, Uganda, and seeks to identify ways to improve cooperation and support among different governmental and non-governmental policy actors.<br><br>Here she is… |
| | **Andrea Brown** [00:34:58] Good afternoon. My own research over the past 20 years has focused on the governance of urban spaces in East Africa, in Tanzania, Kenya, and or Uganda. the research I'm working on deals with migrants that are coming into Uganda. So most of these migrants that are not internal migrants are coming from this wider area, from South Sudan, the DRC, which is over here, but also large numbers from Rwanda, Ethiopia and Somalia.<br><br>So, I'm a political scientist. And governance has really been the constant in my research. I'm always interested in how different levels of government, from very local levels to municipal and up to national and global governance factors, how they interact with local and international nongovernmental organizations, community groups with the private sector.<br><br>As a feminist, I'm also I've always been interested in the roles that gender plays. And so, these other topics, these have been frequent areas of study that I return to that overlap with my research on gender and urban governance. And I've been looking at questions tied to food security for about ten years.<br><br>Cities in Africa are growing really fast. A lot of people, when you when you think about Africa, you think about rural Africa, when you think about food systems, you think about agriculture. And again, have this rural lens, and, and hunger as a problem of food security and the need to make changes to food production. But by 2040, the population of Africa is going to reach 1 billion. And by 2050, more Africans are going to be living in cities, than living in rural areas. Sub-Saharan Africa has the fastest rate of urbanization in the world.<br><br>So what we're seeing is both, urbanization of poverty. That is, urbanization without industrialization. It's an urbanization characterized by growing slum populations and a feminization of poverty, where women and girls are concentrated amongst the most impoverished and the most food insecure in these urban spaces. So in these urban settings, food security is really about access. Very few people can grow their own food. They're buying it. And in order to buy it, they need regular supplies of cash. And they have very limited strategies to to manage this day by day. |

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| | So the research project I'm involved in now is looking at the mixed migrant populations in the capital of Uganda, Kampala, and looking at the programs, the policies, the practices that are in place to address food insecurity. Most of the migrants to Kampala, and this is internal migrants coming from rural areas as well as the international migrants. Most of these are women. And as both women and migrants, they're often invisible in the data that we have about populations living in informal settlements and working in the informal sector. There is a growing, amount of data. There's a lot of quantitative, empirical research underway, but a lot of what happens with, with household data collection really cannot see what's happening and can't see where people are coming from. And some of the the real diversity in these communities.<br><br>So Kampala itself as the capital is both a hub for migration and a destination for migrants from internationally and internally. Uganda's got a really widely recognized as progressive refugee policy. So refugees coming to Uganda can make a choice of going to a refugee camp, or they can self settle in Kampala and give up those sort of refugee provisions of food, food distribution and so on. But they have rights to work. They have the same access as Ugandan citizens to schools, to hospitals. And there's also very high rates of rural to urban migration for climate change and other reasons.<br><br>So the female crisis migrants in Kampala are amongst the most impoverished food insecure populations in informal settlements. And the research I'm doing is asking what can be done to support the food security for this group and who can do it. And how could this be improved? So they have limited or poor access to water, sanitation and hygiene. Many are not only living in very inadequate housing, but many are unhoused. They may have barriers, due to language. Many are unemployed. Many who are coming, have no education and have no skills that can be immediately transferred into employment. They have a lot of responsibility of care for children and for elderly. These are communities marked by violence. They may face discrimination, based on, where, where they're coming from as well as gender discrimination. And many have experienced a great deal of trauma in their lives.<br><br>This group of, of migrants, in particular, many of the the women migrants were among and are amongst most impoverished and food insecure populations in Kampala and in particular, the Covid lockdown was very, very difficult for this group of individuals. Uganda had one of the longest lockdowns in the world. Schools were closed for two years. Markets were shut down for a while. Transportation was shut down for a while. There was a lengthy period where if women wanted to be selling and it's mostly women who are the retailers and food markets, they had to sleep in their market stalls overnight. They couldn't travel in the city, return back and forth. |

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| | So returning to me, the question that I was asking with this research, what's being done to support the food security of this group? By who and how could it be improved? I do have a very long answer about what's being done by various, stakeholders, but just to make the answer very short, it's not a great deal. There's a lot of policy that has not actually been implemented, and a lot of things that were started before Covid that were sort of put on the backburner and have not been picked up again. NGOs and government actors are under resourced and as such are really in competition with one another for scarce resources and not collaborating a great deal.<br><br>In terms of what's being done by these women themselves and their communities, it really is best characterized as coping strategies. What can be done better? I think my first point is to recognize the problem that food security is an important rural issue which has manifestations that is very urban, which has manifestations in urban settings, which are different from those in rural settings and need different responses. And also that the female migrant experience is different than just the generalized migrant experience. And different responses and data collection are needed there too.<br><br>So I'll wrap up there and, and, happy to answer any questions when we get to that, stage of the panel. |
| **LY Narration** | Hearing from everyone really brought to light how interconnected our work is, even across very different places and experiences.<br><br>There are some really neat connections between what's happening at the municipal level and the bigger picture with international networks and governance.<br><br>I also found it fascinating how the experiences of the people I worked with in Quito mirrored what Indigenous communities in the Northwest Territories and migrants in Kenya are going through. It didn't come up in the panel, but for me, it really shows how important food sovereignty is across all these places.<br><br>Dr. Blay Palmer picked up on these connections and asked us to dig a little deeper into how our work intersects.<br><br>Here's what we talked about next. |
| | **Andrea Brown**. So one thing that I was really interested in, in the parts around urban agriculture in Quito and the garden project in the Northwest Territories, mostly because this has not worked in East Africa. There is an urban agriculture policy in Kampala. There's policies in Tanzania and Kenya that I've looked at, and it's just been colossally unsuccessful. You know, populations are really dense. The environments where slums are located are not |

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| | secure. They're often in sort of toxic areas that are not good for growing. So I found that maybe not, maybe not a connection, but a really a really interesting thing.<br><br>Something I think about a lot really interesting to hear about like Carla, a lot of my research is not, you know, about women, but the roles that women play and their experiences are really are really central. So that resonated with me.<br><br>And yeah, and the points that Laine made about her positionality really resonated with me too. My work also relies heavily on the collaboration and support with my colleagues in Africa, and particularly when I'm doing qualitative interviews with vulnerable populations. I'm I'm always thinking, you know, about what are the ethics and what are the responsibilities of of listening to this and, and listening especially to to stories that are, that are really hard. And what my responsibility is with, with sharing those experiences and stories. |
| | **Carla Johnston** Yeah. I think some of the connections that I see between our work, one of the another piece that connected really well with me, was this thinking around reflexivity and positionality, as a female researcher, but, that is working with a population that isn't our own. And I can see that kind of throughout, both all of our projects.<br><br>And one of the ways that I think that all of our projects have come to, work with those, positions is I particularly liked in your question. Andrea, like your research question. The by who, was an important part of the question. And I think that really speaks to how, it's upholding the voices of the folks that we're working with, as well as trying to think about those questions around co-production and coordination, so that that there is kind of this upholding of those voices of the people that we're working with and supporting, them through that co-production. Those are the connections that I saw. |
| | **Laine Young** I agree, obviously, I think, I saw the connections between, the community based research is sort of in all three of ours. I, I thought it was interesting, I, I didn't I mean, Carla, you and I have talked about research quite a bit, but, your links to the grandmothers I thought was really interesting and related to my work because, for a lot of urban folks in Quito, participating in urban agriculture helps to connect them to their, like, Andean roots and their growing traditional foods and really connecting to their ancestors. So I found that connection to be really interesting. And one I hadn't thought of before.<br><br>And then I think. Andrea, with your work. You know, the recommendation to, again, target kind of the most vulnerable and start there first. I think that's what AGRUPAR does. And so I can definitely see some connections there and, like, focusing on the populations that need the support the most. Yeah. And that's sort of where, where AGRUPAR comes from. |

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| **LY Narration** | Ah, now those connections between the three very different places become even clearer.<br><br>At this point in the panel, the conversation shifted toward the importance of active participation by women and gender-diverse people in research.<br><br>So, let's hear what the three of us had to say. |
| | **Andrea Brown** So I, you know, thinking about. Access. And I think this came up in a couple of things that Carla and Laine said. You know, as a, as a woman going into doing research with women in Africa, I think there's been some, some benefits with having access to female spaces and going into kitchens and the willingness of women to speak openly to me. The other side of that privilege is that their perspectives and experiences are often invisible and not valued. And so I, I hope that my, my research, as a woman, is helpful in highlighting and highlighting how and why their perspectives and experiences matter.<br><br>In East Africa, there's a lot of male researchers who do research on women. I think there's there's not that many women compared to men in universities who are that as active researchers. There's a lot of consultancy work in this area. A lot of that work is really practical. So it's so important, but it's informed by a really narrow set of goals usually connected to increasing women's incomes, participation, but not not rocking any boats.<br><br>So I think going back to the question, the research that really pushes the boundaries, but that starts to demand big changes in laws and systems to benefit women and to, benefit gender diverse people. That's typically coming from women or gender diverse folks who are doing that research. |
| | **Carla Johnston** I think I want to take this opportunity to recognize that a lot of the partners that I work with as part of my research are women. So in the two communities up north in the Northwest Territories, my main community partners are, leaders of the community that are women. And they really do kind of take charge, of doing much of the coordinating around programming within their communities, kind of being that connector, that glue, of community life and that that is significant that it usually is women that do that work.<br><br>And then also at the UN level, it's often, women that I have interacted with as well. It is a bit more of a diverse group. I've connected mostly with the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism. And there's a wide diversity of, folks that engage in that space. But many of them are women, and it's usually their powerful voices, that have that advocacy kind of come forward. And I think that that's important to recognize as well. |

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| | **Laine Young** So I guess the way I sort of think about this. There are a lot of structures and systems that influence our lives, that are really like impacted or imagined or imagined by or reflect the experiences of men. I think that's just like a common part of our structure. And so I think having women and also gender diverse perspectives in our research allow us really to create and mobilize knowledge that is based on those diverse perspectives and those diverse experiences, and it allows us really to challenge the status quo.<br><br>And I think also, you know, it's so hard in a lot of the places where we do research, but we really do need, you know, including more of those gender diverse, voices and, and, participants if we're going to ever make changes. So, yeah, I just think, like to challenge the system and challenge structures you really need to work with, with women and gender diverse folks. So that's what we need. |
| **LY Narration** | This was such an important conversation to have, especially at an event celebrating International Women's Day.<br><br>One of the audience members asked a really thoughtful question about how we can support more men in pursuing research with a feminist lens—while still making sure to uplift women and gender-diverse researchers.<br><br>Here's what Dr Brown shared on that: |
| | **Andrea Brown** right now, the three people that I'm working on this research with right now are, are all men. And I think it's, I think it's really common in Africa and in East Africa for men to be doing research and research projects that that have a gender lens. And I'm not I'm not really sure why. That's why. That's more of a challenge here. I'd love to know what the what the experience is in Quito with that.<br><br>And it's not it's not that Tanzania is this, like, super feminist, progressive political culture. Because it's it's not, there's certainly challenges there, but there's a lot of interest for, for men to be working on these areas. |
| | **Laine Young** The right answer for this, I think, is to do intersectional research. I think everyone should be doing intersectional research. You know, I think. When we. If we made intersectionality the standard. And it's not like we're doing gender research, we're doing feminist research, we're doing research that thinks about the holistic experiences of everybody. And that doesn't have to be done by women.<br><br>It can be as simple as asking yourself in your research, or men can ask themselves in their research, like where does knowledge come from? Who? Who's bringing this knowledge forward? How do the power relations present relate to my results and impact my results? How? Why do I need to think about scale? Why do I need to do I? Am I using reflexivity in this research? How has history impacted where we are? Am I using social justice? Am I promoting |

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| | equity in the work, in the research that I'm doing and like thinking about again, like how does resilience and resistance and activism really, impact the studying, the work that's being done? I think anyone can do this. It doesn't have to be specified by gender.<br><br>So my fight is for everyone to do intersectional research. And that's how I think. I think it can happen. |
| | **Carla Johnston** I think that's a really hard question to answer. I think it has to do a lot with kind of the broader, structures of our society, including political and, you know, social structures. And like kind of the traditional, gendered like roles in certain fields. But oftentimes, you know, social justice work is seen as mere women's work, which I completely disagree with that.<br><br>And that there, you know, social justice and thinking about sustainability should be a questions that we're all trying to answer. Not just women, but it is very common in these fields to see mostly women taking on some of these, questions. And yeah, I think it's a hard question. And I think part of the answer is that it's really, you know, putting women in these places, of authority, of places where they can teach and impart knowledge. And just like a shout out that, you know, I've been very fortunate to, have, been, mentored and supported by some really fantastic, female academics. And it's really kind of their, influence that I think other folks, and men in particular can, gain from as well. |
| **LY Narration** | Intersectionality definitely came up again, I probably sounded like a broken record! But it's such an important topic.<br><br>One point that really stuck with me was what Carla said about the importance of having women and gender-diverse folks in leadership roles. That's absolutely essential.<br><br>Then the conversation shifted, with Jane asking us to share some powerful examples of women leading in food systems and research.<br><br>Here's what we shared. |
| | **Carla Johnston** I think those are very strong examples of women in food systems. In particular, in particular, I'll talk about, my research partner, Ruby Jumbo from Sambaa K'e First Nation. She was really the one that spearheaded kind of like all of this berry knowledge, traditional, berry knowledge work. And it was through her, like, coming to me and being like, Carla, we're really excited about the garden. But I also really want people to be talking about berries. And I remember her specifically asking me, she's like, does your research have to be just about the garden? I was like, no, of course not. It can be about other things too. And she's like, okay, let's talk about berries. And, just |

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| | she's constantly pursuing these, methods to encourage, the younger generation to be taking on traditional practices like berry picking, and just constantly trying to find partnerships and ways to encourage and, promote, you know, these practices amongst all of the generations, but in particular, young people. |
| | **Andrea Brown** So I know the people who lead the community based organizations and informal settlements are amazing. And you know what? I was thinking about this earlier. There's an organization called Slum Aid Project that works in Kampala's got 57 different informal settlements and in one of the larger ones there is one organization run by one woman that's been there for about 25 years. And she has been on a shoestring writing grants, making partnerships, working with other NGOs, working with academics, trying to trying to travel around, whenever possible. And she works with teens and with young mothers around sexual health and sexual violence and, and making choices that will lead to them having positive lives. And she runs a community. She runs a community kitchen for people there. And I, I think she's just one example of, of hundreds who are just these, these very small one off community organizations that are making an enormous difference where they are. |
| | **Laine Young** I'll talk about Alexandra again. Alexandra Rodriguez, she's my community partner. She's amazing. just like intimate knowledge of the food system in Quito. Is incredible. Like, she is, she knows so much and has so much influence. She's really been a part of, like, the international recognition that Quito has gotten, the awards that they've won. She just cares so deeply about the participants, and telling their stories. And that's why she's so such a proponent of research, like, you know, researchers coming to Quito to talk about AGRUPAR.<br><br>Also, my participants, so many of them are women. These are women that are leaders in their communities. They're leading in activism. They're leading in environmental like knowledge. Anyone who has a question about climate change or the environment will come to them, because they know that they're a part of this project that's making a difference. They're advocating for organic growing use chemical in their communities. And they're also making incomes to support their entire family and bringing opportunities in. So, they're incredible.<br><br>And, to add to that, I mean, there's so many people here in this room that are also, just example, great examples of women in power, in research positions. |
| **LY Narration** | That's a powerful sentiment to end on.<br><br>The LCSFS team includes so many incredible women leading the way in food system transformation.<br><br>The final question of the panel invited each of the panelists to share brief thoughts on future research directions for new researchers. |

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| | Here's what Carla had to say. |
| | **Carla Johnston** Yeah. Thinking about, going forward, this panel really kind of, made me think of the idea of, how could, you know, the frameworks of indigenous resurgence, which I engage with quite a bit in my research and, feminist research could be brought together. And I'm sure there's lots of research out there that's been done on that.<br><br>But I think that that could be a really exciting place, for people to find these interconnections between, feminist and intersectional research, as well as indigenous resurgence, because it is something that, you see that's important. You know, in real life, for example, in the Northwest Territories, there are starting to become more supports for young indigenous men. And that really speaks to the importance of intersectionality, of recognizing that there are different challenges and opportunities based on your different intersections. And so I think that that could be a very interesting place for, for research to go in the future. |
| | **Laine Young** So, as we all know, I'm continually, perpetually, always advocating for intersectionality. So, you know, I just think like it's so impactful to food systems research, but also, I think to many other bits of research, it's just it's really growing right now.<br><br>And then, I mean, I kind of mentioned it before, but, it is so challenging to do in many different parts of the world, but we really need to focus on, getting more gender diverse perspectives in, into research. You know, there's tons of work if I'm thinking about urban agriculture with women. You know, we see it all over. But like, having that gender diverse perspective is really, is so important right now. And, we just have to push to get that research going and, in a safe way in a lot of the communities that we work in. So, I see that as a future moving forward, as well. |
| | **Andrea Brown** I was at a, a workshop recently, and there are some people who are doing research on women in food who are talking about the sort of cultural connections with food and the importance to the definition of food security, of having culturally appropriate food. And I think there's not too much of that in the African context, where it always seems to be the default of, you know, is there enough food? Are there are there calories and not sort of paying attention to what what people are used to eating or.<br><br>And there is some really interesting stuff that sort of popped up in my work in, in Uganda, where there were a, where people from South Sudan saying they didn't like Ugandan food, but they were discovering some of the some of the Ethiopian food and Ethiopian, food actually came from South Sudan. Once upon a time. A lot of the crops and things grown there, and I was thinking, wow, this is this is fascinating. So I'd love to to learn more about that. |

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| | And then, yeah, echoing from what what Laine said, I think there's a there's a big empty space looking at diverse populations, especially the LGBTQ community. In a lot of these conversations, this is really impossible in Uganda right now with the draconian legal environment. That kind of research would not get get clearance. But I think there's there's scope for doing that research. And in other directions and, and certainly perhaps working with global partners and stuff. |
| **LY Narration** | Those were some really interesting ideas. I appreciated how Carla brought up Indigenous Resurgence, and Andrea's emphasis on the importance of cultural connections to food. It was also great to hear the focus on gender-diverse perspectives in research, something both Dr. Brown and I highlighted.<br><br>All in all, I think the future of research in this area is really bright. |
| **LY Narration** | Well, thanks so much to our panel guests, Dr. Andrea Brown and Carla Johnston. |
| **LY Narration** | Of course, and to Dr. Alison Blay-Palmer and Jane Clause for organizing and hosting the panel, and the attendees who asked such meaningful questions.<br><br>(Outro music begins)<br><br>Thanks so much for tuning in for this episode of *Handpicked* |
| **CS Narration** | Make sure to stay tuned for more freshly picked stories from the field |
| **LY Narration** | This episode was hosted and produced by us: Laine Young [and Charlie Spring], our Production Assistant, Narayan Subramoniam.<br><br>This episode features music from Keenan Reimer-Watts. |
| **CS Narration** | *Handpicked* is produced with support from the Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems, Wilfrid Laurier University, and the Balsille School of International Affairs. |
| **LY Narration** | Please check out our show notes for a bibliography, teaching tools, and links to other relevant information that we used to produce this episode. Make sure you check out our website for other ways to engage with us. |
| **CS Narration** | This episode produced on the lands of the Neutral, Anishaanabe and Haudenosaunee people. We encourage you all to check the land acknowledgement link in the show notes to learn more. |

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| | As always, I'm Charlie Spring... |
| **LY Narration** | ...and I'm Laine Young and this has been an episode of the Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems' podcast, *Handpicked*. |
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