

## **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

### **FPCI Global Town Hall Series #4**

## **Transforming Ideas into Impact: How Individuals and Civil Society Groups Can Drive Meaningful Changes?**

Virtually Held on Monday, 4 March 2024

10.00 - 11.30 Jakarta Time / 14.00 - 15.30 Melbourne Time

### **A. ABOUT THE SESSION**

In today's rapidly evolving technological and geopolitical landscape, the capacity for individuals and civil society groups to affect meaningful change has expanded beyond traditional government channels. While governments from the U.S. to China, and from the Global North to the Global South still play a crucial role, the democratization of information and communication tools has empowered ordinary people and grassroots organizations to contribute to societal progress in unprecedented ways. Good ideas can come from anywhere. However, transforming individual ideas into tangible changes requires strategic planning, collaboration, compromise, and sustained effort. Building alliances with like-minded individuals and organizations can amplify impact and create momentum for change. Fostering a culture of civic engagement and participatory democracy, therefore, is essential for ensuring that individual ideas translate into concrete actions and lasting improvements in society. In short, the world urgently awaits the age of the citizen policy entrepreneur.

### **B. SPEAKERS**

1. **Mick Sheldrick**, Author of "From Ideas to Impact: A Playbook for Influencing and Implementing Change in a Divided World"; Chief Policy, Impact and Government Affairs Officer and Co-Founder of Global Citizen
2. **Brianna Fruean**, Climate Activist
3. **Dr. Dino Patti Djalal**, Founder and Chairman of Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia (Moderator)

## C. KEY TAKEAWAYS

### 1. How individuals can move forward and initiate change

“First of all, I don't in any way diminish any of the individual actions that each of us can take. You know, we can register to vote. We can donate to incredible organizations who are doing great work at the grassroots. We can also use our time to have conversations. You know, in the U.S., only 8% of American households even talk about climate change in any given year. The one thing that doesn't come up a lot is the idea of getting involved in policy change. And, you know, from my perspective, that's a huge concern, and it's a huge concern on two levels. The first way it's a concern is back to that, if we look at the pandemic, for instance, you know, a few years ago, you know, we saw that even when people were in lockdown, no one could move, emissions are systemic, right? Because our transportation, our energy systems, our industrial processes, the way we make everything from steel and cement, all of that is powered by fossil fuels, right? Or other processes like deforestation, which is, of course, huge in Brazil and Indonesia. So, enact policies, right? It's policies that are going to change that. **If you want to change systemic challenges, you need systemic solutions.** But I'm also aware that when we talk about policy change, that can seem very abstract, and it can seem like that is something that belongs in the domain of governments alone. But the truth is, our governments are not moving fast enough. We have a crisis of implementation. You can see that in the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals, the U.N. 17-point plan to end extreme poverty and address climate change. Last year at the halfway mark, just 12% had been achieved. **So, my argument is that we need to turn to people, and whether that is cultural icons like Taylor Swift, whether that's businesses, or whether that's everyday citizens, we all need to get involved to address this crisis of implementation.**” Mick Sheldrick.

### 2. Becoming an impact maker

“So I grew up in a small island state where you don't really exist as one. It's not an individualistic society. So you exist as part of a village or part of a family. **And so getting into climate work was more than just an individual choice for me because I saw that the climate crisis was the biggest threat to my village. It was the biggest threat to my community.** And so it wasn't really something that I woke up one day and thought, as an individual, I wanted to become an activist. I actually struggle with the word activist because I think sometimes in the Western sense, activism is a choice. And I don't know if I really chose the path of climate justice. I feel like I just so happened to be born in the generation that really needed to do something. And so that's the context in which I first started my work in climate work.” Brianna Fruean.

### 3. Scaling Up Ideas to Wider Audience

“Instead of activist, I used the term policy entrepreneur because **policy entrepreneur says, yes, we have to engage in direct advocacy, but we also need non-traditional methods, right, to get people engaged.** I think the first one is around the power of bold, naively

audacious goals, right? ..There are many times in life where we take on a challenge, and we don't have access to networks, right? We don't have the expertise, or the implementation experience, or the technical experience, or we don't have, you know, access to funding, or we don't even have access to power, right? And his argument based on a lifetime of research is that if you have a naively audacious goal, it is very clear in terms of the impact that will happen if certain actions are taken. So if Y policy is implemented, Z policy, Z outcome will happen over here, that can be enough to rally people around, to overcome that inexperience, to overcome that lack of access, to overcome that lack of networks, because right now, especially in a divided polarized era, the era of the poly crisis, as you've called it, your people yearning for solutions, they're yearning for clear goals in terms of how to make an impact. And I, in my own experience of seeing this, even with the start of global citizen, one of our first campaigns, you know, in Australia, started with just an idea of a goal, something we wanted to change on the back of the envelope.

But what I found is that when I circulated that idea, and I took it around to people, people wanted to help, they wanted to respond..... So I don't discount the power of naively audacious goals. And in the book, I outline how to identify those goals, and how to make them very clear, concrete, and, and precise. **I think the second key element**, I would say, Ambassador, **is when we talk about scale, we often assume we have to do it all ourselves.** But actually, there's something to be said on the left in the power of leverage, and the power of leveraging partners. And I think too, too often, especially in the activist space, we find people competing with one another for the same audience, for the same access to decision makers for the same funders, rather than turning around and asking ourselves the question, what is the unique thing I can do really well? Right? And then what are my shortfalls? And how can I find partners to overcome that? That's how you can scale really, really fast and really quickly. You know, there's that great saying, **no one can do everything, but everyone can do something. And that's what we need to leverage people.**" Mick Sheldrick.

#### **4. Capturing and moving public opinion**

"When we were young and we were starting through 50 Samoa, Pacific Climate Warriors Samoa, what we just did, we just, **before we would say anything, like go to the media or put out any campaigns, we just did something.** We thought the work could speak. And at the time, because we were so young, when I say we started young, we were like 12, 13 year olds who started this environmental group in Samoa just from a primary school group. And that was the start of Pacific Climate Warriors Samoa. And we were just doing small community events. **And we thought we weren't going to preach to our community and say like, climate change is a big thing. We should be doing this, you should be doing that. We thought we should just do it.** So instead of saying it, we should just go out there and we started with primary school school kits. So we did like an audit of our school on how environmentally friendly our school was. We did like a carpool registry for everyone who lived in the same village so that people could come in like less cars into school. **And so we did these like very small things that we had control of. And the message just got out there in the community, because the community saw that we were doing the work.** And

that's really how we got a hold of that narrative of climate change isn't something that's happening to us. It's something that we are taking a grip of." Brianna Fruean.

## 5. Addressing the challenges of geopolitics

"I think it's a constant struggle for CSOs (Civil Society Organization) in the Pacific, especially when certain political parties have ties to different countries from their opposing political party, right? And so there could be climate projects that are supposed to span eight years, and then a new government comes, and then there's that switch. There's that switch in geopolitical alliances." Brianna Fruean.

"... I would just say is, you know, I think from our side at global citizen, it's also about remembering, and I think this is true of all big institutions and entities that are much larger than us, that **good ideas can come from everywhere, right, everywhere and anywhere, and not forgetting that and how we can amplify those solutions.** And, you know, increasingly, we spend a lot of time working with governments of these countries, you know, then what do you think we should be advocating for? What should we be pushing the G20 to implement? And I use an example here, of course, you know, the other side of the Pacific is the Caribbean, right? And there's an incredible leader in the Caribbean, many on this call might have heard of Mia Motley, the Prime Minister of Barbados, and she and a number of partners have developed this Bridgetown initiative, which is really, you know, at its simple steps, is a way to unlock more money for countries like hers to be able to transition to clean energy, and better withstand natural disasters. And many of them are very simple ideas, like if there's a hurricane, or flood, you know, a country like hers should have an automatic recovery in their debt repayment, so that they can invest in local response and bounce back better. **And I think from our perspective, it's like, how can we support leaders like that, both to captivate.**" Mick Sheldrick.


## 6. Campaigning for policy changes & getting policy-makers to listen

"Something that we found really useful was, like Mick said, like this meaningful engagement with governments. Like, we noticed, and this is specific to the context of Pacific governments as well, but we wanted to move beyond transactional conversations, right? Like, we want this from you. We see you doing this for us. We wanted to actually sit with them and hear, like, how do you actually see this fossil-free Pacific being built? Because I think that can sometimes be the mistake that people walk into policy makers or decision-makers' rooms is that we have all the answers and you haven't been trying. Sometimes there is work that's being done behind the scenes that we as the public aren't privy to. So that was always the first conversation that we tried to have with governments if we didn't go in there with the assumption that they weren't working towards a fossil-free Pacific. **We asked them, what does this actually look like for you? And is there work that we should be aware of? And once we kind of, like, started that conversation and tried to, like, build a relationship with our governments, that's when, like, the real conversation started.**" Brianna Fruean.

“..you know, **one of the best things that you can do if you've got a decision maker's time is look for narratives and stories.** And those stories and narratives that will resonate are those that focus firstly on why. Why am I here? What's my origin story? Right. **And secondly, on the power of how.** Right. People want solutions, even decision makers. Right. So show them how they can address these issues. Don't just give them, you know, it's not even about being angry and it's not about giving them all the facts and statistics, but tell them why they should trust you and the solution.

The third tip I've got is to think about **how you can break down addressing a huge challenge like air pollution into bite-sized steps.** You may not be able to address all the issues at once, but how can you, how can you at least pick off some of those challenges? And an example of that at the global level is the fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty. This effort was born because of gridlock at the climate talks in terms of securing an agreement to phase out fossil fuel. And what they recognized is we're not going to get universal consensus like in Saudi Arabia or the U.S. and all these other countries rely on fossil fuel revenues straight away. And so what they decided is we're first going to start with countries like the Pacific.” Michael Sheldrick

#### **LINK TO SESSION:**

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