

APPENDIX II: SELECTED KEY QUOTES

On paradigm shifts:

“I think there’s a big mental barrier where we perceive that the biggest barriers to climate change actually being like David Cameron or politicians who are in power and review them as the power but the reality is that they’re only powerful because we give them that power. There’s a big shift that we have to do in our minds for that. I think we constantly sort of see ourselves as having to work to change their minds and the main thing being our struggle, the climate struggle requires people to take action to make things change, but the people who are powerful could be sometimes direct [campaigns against us] and the actual power relies on people not doing anything to make a change. So it’s never going to happen if that’s the way that we constantly look at stuff. We have to change our minds to see how we do things without trying to co-opt our... Because they are not going to agree with this, their struggle is the opposite of ours. They rely on us not winning.” – Jamie Peters, Former YOUNGO Focal Point

On power:

“There is absolutely and quite clearly right away imbalance of power in those narratives that we’ve been talking about a little bit. If we are using the context of a fossil fuel divestment campaign the fossil fuel industry and the institutionalized PR machines of universities just have untold amount of resources to battle the narratives that things like grassroots fossil fuel divestment campaigns are trying to bring up and questioning that corporate influence and academic freedom and in questioning the legitimacy or the ethics of profiting from the climate crisis. So there is those imbalances of power we see sort of right away but when we start doing this work or when I start doing this work, I can only speak for myself. So that’s loud and clear right away and that analogy I think brings about a lot of grassroots climate campaigns and even larger climate campaigns, the resources in the wherewithal and the history and the legacy of the fossil fuel industry, and the sort of liberal PR that comes with that is just way older than we are and older than this movement is so there’s certainly an imbalance of power there.” – Stephen Thomas, Canadian Youth Delegate to COP21

“One writer, an activist I really admire is Starhawk, and she talks about power and responsibility, and that people feel empowered when the level of responsibility they have is equal to the amount of power they have. [...] One of the challenges we face is we feel as climate activists a lot of responsibility but not always a lot of power. We feel responsible for ending fossil fuels, but I don’t really have the power to do that on my own. We have to join together, and that takes a lot of time.” – Daniel Jubelirer, SustainUS

“For me, it’s quite a constant sense of an imbalance of power, just pervasive across all of these activities and you can take cross sections or microcosms out of various situations to be able to see that, whether it’s the UNFCCC process and the vast amount of resources and delegates. Some countries’ delegations have versus other countries, particularly from the global south, the

non-resources that corporate lobbies pour into, influencing policymakers, U.N. reps, etc. But then more generally, there is an incredible amount of power and resources concentrated in ruling elites and people who have a vested interest in the maintenance of kind of a system that breeds inequality and is in a state of meta-stabilization that inherently makes it incredibly challenging for any kind of counter power to be able to rise and meet the power kind of on a symmetrical plane. It's always asymmetrical in terms of outward relations." – Anonymous climate organizer "[Plans for COP21] Well, a lot of the agreement will be decided by the large powers and they will have a huge amount of sway in terms of being able to block and buy off and whatnot where there are elements of the text that they don't want. As to what extent we can counteract, I think that's one issue I want to be involved in equally, just exposing that sort of special interest corruption that has a role in the talks from fossil fuel industry lobbyists working for nations like Australia, and still for Canada, the United States, whatnot, exposing some of the dirty tricks that the rich companies use and just going up against fossil producers playing along. I think it's going to be a lot of fun." – Pekka Piirainen, UK Youth Climate Coalition

"When people criticize the UNFCCC, they don't tend to criticize the process and the people involved. [...] People are worried that that's how we translate it, but I don't think that's the case. You can criticize the process in the effort to improve it. So there are positive things about the UNFCCC, which is one thing it's not - - and I don't know how to articulate this.

But there's things like the SDGs and the Rio+20 which are really pompous and very under the guise of like core U.N. And even the youth core involvement actually has felt very tokenized. And whilst we are tokenized to some extent in the UNFCCC, I find it as sort of a limb. It's a little bit further away. It's a little bit working in silos. So there are things that we are allowed to do in the UNFCCC that you're not really allowed to do in other U.N. forums. It's a little bit removed.

So in that way I appreciate that. But in so many other ways it's flawed. It's inequitable. Smaller countries are not fairly represented. So there are countries who bring hundreds of staff, and then there's some countries that can barely bring two. So that process is clearly unfair when there's like 12 sessions. In the last one there were 12 sessions arranged to happen at the exact same time. How is Tuvalu, for example - - I don't know if they did have this many people, but imagine if they had five delegates. How are they meant to cover 12 important sessions when they've only got 5 people there? I guess that's one way." – Fatima Ibrahim, UK Youth Climate Coalition

"So, we do work with environmental justice groups, and there's been a longstanding difficult dynamic between Big Green organizations, like Sierra Club, and grassroots environmental justice groups, particularly environmental justice groups that are led by communities of color, and low-income communities, but communities of color especially. And there's very obviously a huge misbalance of people are being affected most by environmental degradation, and the groups who are working on the front lines, and organizations that are very well-funded to deal with these issues, and get the most name recognition.

There's some crazy statistic, something like 90 percent of funding for environment groups goes to the top 20 organizations, something like that. That's probably not exactly what it is, but it's something as preposterous as that. [Laughter] That basically cuts a lot of environmental justice

groups, particularly, out of funding. And I witnessed a lot in spaces where that gap is trying to be bridged right now. But the way that's it's done is, the environmental justice groups have to be invited into spaces, or brought in by the Big Greens, and be associated with them, rather than just being there autonomously.

A lot of re-granting happens through big organizations, too, like grassroots and environmental justice groups, and I think that creates this master/slave sort of dynamic. Another place where this plays out, is from the funding community to all groups at large, where the funding community is not really doing the work at all, but they control so much of what makes the work possible that they're either subtly or directly pulling the reins in a lot of ways, and creating strategies for funding that are completely divorced from the reality of how advocacy can or needs to be done, and that is a huge problem that I'm privy to." – Evan Weber, Executive Director, U.S. Climate Plan

"If you were an organization that could afford a pavilion or a big booth or anything like that, then you had a space to come together and work. And if you didn't, then you were sitting on the floor in the hallways. In those basic structural ways it seemed like it was really set up to quiet people's voices [...] Large, wealthy, white, global north NGOs had more power than, yeah, small global south NGOs led by women of color. The language barrier is massive. The faster you can speak English, the more power you have in that space." – Morgan Curtis, Climate Journey

On power and academia:

"This kind of perpetuates the existing power imbalances in the system. Because if somebody gets tenure you are pretty old, usually. [Laughter] Is basically impossible to get tenure at a young age nowadays. And once again, age basically, creates some of this [imbalance], and similarly it's really hard, massively hard for women to get tenure in comparison to males. It perpetuates that, as well. And what do we have? It ends up that most advocates end up being elderly white males essentially. I say that while having full respect and really loving Bill McKibben and James Hansen academically." – COP researcher and advocate

On power:

"[When working on the Divest Tufts campaign], we were trying to change something, and we felt we didn't have the decision-making ability we needed." – Daniel Jubelirer

"I think that balance of power is reflected in who gets to spin the story and who is able to from a resource standpoint spread that story. And the groups that will benefit from having a triumphant story but do not suffer the cost of the inadequacy of policy or the ones spreading that," says Adam Hasz, a former leader of a U.S. youth delegation to COP.