Healthy Environment Webinar 13-06

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**SPEAKERS**

Lucy Miller, Benji

00:03

Welcome to human rights 2020 is a podcast from the Human Rights consortium, Scotland. This episode is a recording from an event titled Aurora international human rights, the right to a healthy environment held on the 13th of June 2024. In this episode, Senior Policy Officer wisi Miller introduces Benji Brown, from the environmental rights Centre for Scotland, to discuss the right to a healthy environment, and the impact it could have when it is incorporated into Scott Hall. We hope that you enjoyed this episode.

**Lucy Miller** 00:41

Hello, everyone. We're just going to get started on this lunchtimes human rights bill webinar series. And today I'm delighted to introduce Benji brand from the environmental rights Centre for Scotland. And we're going to be talking about the right to a healthy environment today. So Ben, did you want to give yourself a better introduction than I've just given you there?

**Benji** 01:02

Thanks, Lucy. And hi, everyone. It's great to be here today. So yeah, I'm Benji, I'm the Policy and Advocacy officer at the environmental rights centre of Scotland or ERC s for short. And our vision is of a Scotland where everyone's right to a healthy environment is respected, protected and fulfilled. We do this by assisting the public and civil society to understand and exercise their environmental rights. We provide free legal expertise and advice on public interest, environmental law, so that people can take action to enforce their rights to the environment, we undertake awareness raising and outreach with marginalised groups across Scotland. And we also do advocacy and policy and law reform to change the legal system ensure it works for both people and planet. And my role is focusing on the policy side. So I work with MSPs in the Scottish Parliament, to ensure we have the best available laws and regulations to defend to protect our environment. And one of the areas I'm working on is of course, the proposed human rights bill and incorporation of the rights of a healthy environment in Scotland.

**Lucy Miller** 02:18

Thanks for that Benji. And my name is Lucy, for those of you that don't know me, I'm the Senior Policy Officer here at Human Rights consortium, Scotland. So just moving on to the first question, Benji, can you please tell me in a nutshell, what the right to a healthy environment is all about? Basically explain the essence of the right to healthy environment and what does this right into achieve for individuals and communities in Scotland? Thanks,

**Benji** 02:42

Lucy. So yeah, across the world, the use of fossil fuels, industrial expansion and overconsumption of resources are causing injustices for people and pushing the planet to breaking point. This should come as news to no one. But yeah, with climate breakdown, biodiversity loss, and the widespread pollution of our lands and water when are facing triple planetary emergency. So, taking on these environmental challenges has never been more urgent. And Scotland is not immune from these problems. And these cascading threats, we must urgently tackle our own environmental problems and unfair impacts on marginalised groups. Pollution, proximity to contaminated land and poor access to nature, rich green space are all examples of substantive environmental problems. And they contribute to inequalities across Scotland in terms of people's health and well being children, older people, disabled people and people with pre existing health problems, often the hardest hit. We also have procedural procedural problems, and how we can use the law to protect and enforce our environmental rights. So we should be able to effectively hold public bodies and polluters to account in a court of law. But as things stand, it's incredibly difficult to use our legal system to do so. It's complicated, intimidating and expensive. We need urgent change. We need an enforceable right to a healthy environment in Scotland so that we can tackle these substantive and procedural problems. This will enable us to stand up for our health and for the planet to achieve a fairer, greener and healthier Scotland for everybody.

**Lucy Miller** 04:23

And why? Why do we need a specific focus on the right to help the environment instead of it being included under broader human rights? Given that environmental issues impact everyone? Why is there a distinct emphasis on the right to health environment as a separate category? What makes it unique? That's

**Benji** 04:40

a great question. Well, a healthy environment underpins and enables the realisation of all other human rights as a precondition, essentially, the right to life itself. Yeah, it's taken time for the environment to be given due regard and recognition international human rights law. It was only in a On July 2022, the United Nations General Assembly recognised and declared the access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a universal human right, and acknowledged that environmental damage has negative impact implications for the effects of enjoyment of all human rights for present and future generations. 160 countries now include the right to health environment and their constitutions because it's necessary for the effective fulfilment of other rights including the right to life, health, foods, water culture and development. But unlike many other rights, where cases are automatically to that an individual level that is important collective dimensions to the right to a healthy environment and interdependency, it dependencies when it comes to environmental rights violations that require special attention and are not necessarily captured in other rights treaties. So to make a real difference to people's lives and effectively protecting the environment, new rights need to be clearly defined, and that needs to happen according to the highest possible standards. So according to scientific bodies, such as the World Health Health Organisation when it comes to air quality, or the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change when it comes to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. And this is necessary to prevent any willful misinterpretation by duty bearers and ensure proper accountability can take place.

**Lucy Miller** 06:32

And from my understanding, the UK has signed several international agreements, recognising the right to a healthy environment already. What obligations does this create for the UK now prior to a Scottish human rights bill? And how is compliance currently monitored? And are there any problems with that, considering the UK is commitments to international treaties and agreements that recognise the right to a healthy environment? What is what are those current obligations.

**Benji** 06:58

So as I mentioned, the UN General Assembly declared the right to a healthy environment two years ago, and this was a key milestone in advancing our substantive environmental rights. And that was supported by many countries, including UK builds on decades of interpretation by binding human rights tribunals authority to Human Rights Studies, as well as evidence compiled by UN Special Rapporteurs, including the special operator and consumer rights in the environment. Yeah, as it stands, the human rights or health environment is only partially recognised in Scots law. So the substantive element of the right which is due to be incorporated, as part of the new human rights bill is currently not recognised in law at all. And the procedural element of the right, which refers to the right to information to on environmental matters to public participation in environmental decision making, and to access to justice and environmental matters. That's currently enshrined under the United Nations Aarhus convention. But it's not been fully implemented by the UK or Scottish governments. So the right to a healthy environment will only really work if it has teeth, if it's effectively fully enforceable, as part of the new human rights bill and accompanied by fundamental reforms in terms of access to justice. And, as I mentioned, we have these six substantive features, which we need to be to have enshrined in law so that includes clean air safe climate, access to safe water and adequate sanitation, access to healthy and sustainably produced food, non toxic environments in which to live work and play and healthy biodiversity ecosystems. And so all of these distinct features need to be recognised within Scots law. And as I said, the to be recognised and defined according to these high standards with adequate enforcement mechanisms. And that comes back to the procedural of the right which is enshrined in the eyes convention. These procedural processes need to be improved, so the Access to Justice is accessible affords both timely and effective for everybody. The UK ratified the Aarhus convention in 2005, and it places special obligations on the Scottish Government uphold these procedural elements of the right to a healthy environment. Compliance with the Aarhus convention, this UN treaty is monitored by a special committee of legal experts that our convention Compliance Committee, and since 2011, they've repeatedly ruled that the UK is in breach of its legal requirements to uphold procedural rights. Specifically, the UK and indeed Scotland is in breach of Article Nine four of the convention which requires that access to justice It is fair, equitable, timely, and not prohibitively expensive. As it stands, our legal system is incredibly unaffordable. And if people want to use the legal system to defend the environment and go to court, to challenge public bodies or polluters for not adequately protecting the environment, their legal costs can spiral to 1000s, or in the 10s of 1000s of pounds. So it means that it's incredible, the difficult to use the legal right to remedy and the legal system can be quite easily captured by more powerful and better resourced companies or other groups who may not have a good interest in preventing environmental harm. And going back to the Aarhus convention, this treaty that we do have, which enshrines these procedural rights, so the committee in 2022, they required the Scottish Government to produce an action plan detailing how it's made recommendations to fully uphold access to justice requirements of the convention. And this requires necessary reforms such as reforms to legal aid to ensure it's easier to undertake public interest and strategic litigation litigation, to ensure the burden doesn't always fall on individuals for taking on an environmental cases when often the impacts whole communities also to reform legal expenses, which currently incredibly unaffordable, as I mentioned, and as well as other matters, that required attention, such as time limits for judicial review, and many other areas, which were in the action plan. So anyway, the Scottish Government did respond, and they produce this action plan. But unfortunately, we only have four months to go before a crucial deadline to meet the recommendations. So that's the first of October 2024. And the Scottish Government is woefully failing on almost all counts. And we're going to be publishing a new briefing next week, which sets out in great detail, just one of these areas where the Scottish Government has really failed to act fast enough. And these are actually really straightforward reforms to enact it's important to say that, like, it's been clear for a very long time, what needs to happen to change, but we're lacking the political will to really bring these changes into effect, and ensure that we have the tools to uphold our right to a healthy environment. So it's really critical that we build pressure on the Scottish Government in the coming months to address these access to justice requirements, which actually do impact across all human rights, not only the right to health, the environment and ensure that we get real action. And I know human rights consulting, Scotland has produced a great report making human rights justice reality, which also goes into what needs to change on access to justice in more detail.

**Lucy Miller** 13:05

Brilliant, thank you for such a thorough answer. I had subsequent patients coming up on the head, but you then continue to answer them also, I will move on to the next question, which is telling us a bit about the core components of the right to a healthy environment. So what are the fundamental elements that constitute it? And how do these components interact to ensure comprehensive protection, sustainability, I guess, I really hope you know, that it can be very hard to dilute the jargon of international human rights into what it actually means we're communities. I think this would be a good point to give that example you went into briefly in the last answer, but what does this actually mean? routined?

**Benji** 13:46

Yeah, so I think this comes back to these six distinct features of the substantive element that I mentioned. So just to recap, we have clean, safe climate, safe water and adequate sanitation, healthy and sustainable foods. Non toxic environments to live work and play and healthy and biodiversity ecosystems. And if we just take one of those examples, so for example, air quality and upholding the right to clean air, clean air that would mean adapting policies, so that air quality meets the high standards set by the World Health Organisation to address particulate matter, to address damaging greenhouse gases such as sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide, which damaged both our health and the climate. And we know this has real implications, especially for marginalised groups and people with pre existing health issues. And obviously, a few years ago, some of you may be aware of the very tragic case of Allah as you can see Deborah who died just aged nine from asthma attack, which was linked in the inquest support air quality I'm in London. And that really underscores why this is so important. And so this is a really vivid example of you know why a right to a healthy environment is so significant because without it, it damages both our health as well as you know, the board's environment in which we all share. And that can really compromise our long term prospects, and it has implications for the realisation of all of our other human rights as well. And our right to dignity and like living a dignified life essentially. And yeah, so having these procedural and substantive rights and shrines and being able to exercise them with freely, could really transform how the government makes decisions about the environment, tackling some of these root causes of food and fuel insecurity and improving our health and well being. And I think, also with provide a bit of backstops, you know, when they are under pressure from vested interests. You know, obviously, we've seen the kind of very facile debate around kind of the introduction of new policies to the clean air and clean air zones recently. And I think having a right to a healthy environment and knowing that there's legal protections and duties on government to uphold, that could really transform some of that debate as well, and how governments and local authorities consider their duties to the public. And I think just another thing as well, with the right to health environment, obviously, we often have these policy silos where we talk about the environment on one hand, and human rights and kind of social justice on the other, and actually, they're fundamentally interlinked. So adopting human rights lens, I think can really illuminate how environmental hazards are unevenly distributed, and environmental burdens are experienced differently by different social groups. Good example of this is around access to green space. And we've seen how local authorities bands have been cut repeatedly during years of austerity, in terms of, like spending on green space, and, you know, public communities. And often this is a left to like the poorest areas being hardest hit. And we see, you know, parks in disrepair, real issues around environmental quality with litter, and just public neglect. And I think that really illustrates the kind of inequality dimension of some of these environmental and justices, which needs to be addressed. So having a right would really clarify relationships between rights holding citizens and duty bearers, by which we mean governments and public bodies, such as SEPA or environmental regulator. But also companies who activities might adversely impacts that right. We know, obviously, a lot of the examples of pollution and environmental damage come from negligence or companies putting their, you know, profit motive above care for people in nature. So I think there's really critical elements here, which could be addressed through having this right and trying to law.

**Lucy Miller** 18:25

Yeah. And are there any particular environmental rights that you think are at risk in Scotland? So in our context, what aspects of the right to health environment do you believe are most vulnerable? Or at risk? And are their current threats exacerbate those risks? This law will help address?

**Benji** 18:46

Well, yeah, I think in Scotland is an interesting case, because obviously, we have huge tracts of land, which are very sparsely populated in the highlands islands. And, you know, often considered like wilderness areas, even though there are obviously communities who inhabit those areas, cotton communities and others. But there is this perception that you know, the Highlands and Islands and mountains of Scotland it's a real haven for wildlife and untouched, an untouched, natural landscape an area of natural beauty, which to some extent is true, but also has, in fact, been really intensively managed. And it's important to note that we are one of the most nature depleted countries in the world out of 240 countries and territories. Scotland is 28 from the bottom in what is known as the biodiversity intactness index, which has basically tracked and measured the kind of integrity of like the natural world and how much biodiversity we still have within our country. And while this largely does measure like historical loss as a species, we know that biodiversity is continuing to decline and a huge amount of work is needed. had to get it back on track. So yeah, I think that's one example. And much of this is a consequence of how land is managed. And in the Highlands and Islands in particular, that is partly about looking at land ownership and like large landowners who remain largely untethered from any real obligations to think about communities and ecosystem helps. And we see there were in fact, we have some of the most concentrated land ownership in the world with half of all private, the owns our rural lands in Scotland are owned by just over four hundreds individuals and companies. And we see how, you know, land is often managed for specific purposes. So like shooting estates, or for grouse malls, for example. And I think grass malls are a really good example where we see you know, they have a negative impact on climate and air pollution when it comes to the burning of header, more lands. And this also has implications for wildlife in terms of habitat destruction, and then a secondary impact as well. And because these areas of lands and the shoot the grouse moors are for the purposes of hunting grouse, so it also has a knock on impact for wild birds. And we'd see poisoning trapping, and shooting a wild birds such as white tailed Eagle gossips, and red kites, which is obviously a real tragedy, and has not really been properly addressed. Other Examples could include commercial forestry plantations in the highlands, and we're seeing large tracts of land converted to just fast growing citrus Sitka spruce at the expense of our native species, an ancient woodlands, which obviously matters for nature, and biodiversity, but also is really important for people's well being and health as well. We know how important some of these areas are for tourism and recreation. So yes, if communities were able to enforce their environmental rights, I think it could change, it could trigger major changes in terms of how and in whose interests land in Scotland is managed.

**Lucy Miller** 22:20

Brilliant. Okay. So the final question is, if the principles of the right to a healthy environment were more deeply embedded into Scottish law and policy, what specific areas do you think would be would see the most significant improvements and and how would these changes manifest in practice?

**Benji** 22:40

Yeah, great question. So I think if it was more embedded in in law, one benefit is that it would change the way in which governments and local authorities really think about policy, and hopefully, we'd have much more joined up and holistic policymaking. So especially when it comes to spending decisions, and and also other fiscal measures. So tax, for example, it's a good area. We know there's lots of changes to the tax system where I think, you know, if environmental considerations were given more thought, we could have like a much more progressive system. And I think overall, there would be a much more thoughtful design, in terms of policies and proposals, ideally, with a more long term focus. And we be able to secure a more responsive and democratic system when it comes to, for example, planning and the approval process for new planning developments. Because often, we've we've seen countless examples where inappropriate developments might have been approved, even when they have adverse impacts for local communities, and for nature. And it's important to say that this isn't just about nimbyism and about, you know, people wanting to like, have a blanket lock on every new development, which happens. I think there's recognition that there's different considerations, which needs to be balanced in terms of net zero and like long term changes across the whole country versus you know, more immediate concerns, but it's also not a dichotomy. And often there are really valid legitimate community concerns that planners or government at national level might not be attentive to, and might disregard if they don't have a duty to take a right to a healthy environment into account. And there's a couple of very real examples of that, I think, where it could have made a difference, but where as things stand, it's been a very fluid process and a planning system. So one example is synthetics pot and Tory and Aberdeen, part of which has been rezoned or industrial developments, part of a proposed energy transition zone. And so some things past What is the last green space in Tory, which is one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the whole of Aberdeen, and is really valued for local communities for health, leisure and recreation. It also has an award winning wetlands which is painstakingly restored by communities and has been kind of commended by SEPA by nature, Scott. But all of this is now at risk, and could be sacrificed as part of this rezoning process and this new development for this transition zone, which will kind of be ostensibly for the purposes of things like hydrogen on offshore winds. But it's being spearheaded by the former oil tycoon and words. And it's really, I think, a really vivid example of where there's been a really sustained campaign by local members of the community. There's very coherent arguments of why this is an inappropriate site for the transition zone, why there's other potential areas on that part of the coast, which might be more appropriate. Yeah, those voices have essentially been disregarded. And despite the really clear breaches of their rights to a healthy environment, they're when it comes to access to green space when it comes to what you know, having all sorts of other areas where this would impact their health and well being this development has been kind of steamrolled ahead. And there's a real risk to the kind of a breach of trust, essentially, between rights holders and duty bearers. But, but yeah, currently, there's like legal elements missing, which mean that it's very hard to secure accountability, despite the way in which there was a kind of lack of democratic process there as well. So yeah, I think that's a really good example, where if planners and councils have a legal obligation to consider, right to health environment, these sorts of disastrous decisions could be more could be avoided. And if we'd have a more sensitive, thoughtful and more functional process.

**Lucy Miller** 27:12

Yeah, that's really great. And really, really thorough example, we're just going to move to our question and answer now. And our first question, Benji is on the UN CRC. So do you see the UN CRC and Corporation Act as having teeth in relation to children's rights to a healthy environment, especially come the 16th of July, when we know that children's rights are currently not being realised in relation to their housing, and school environments?

**Benji** 27:44

A great question. I think it is a major step forward. I know it's been a long journey to get the UN CRC incorporation act. So I think, yeah, there's a really positive step forward there. But I do think it's going to be limited in terms of the impact it can have overall. And I think there's a risk, obviously, with the Scottish Government especially, we've seen a tendency for them to kind of point to certain things that they have done as an excuse for not taking action elsewhere. So for example, what oh, yeah, kind of like deflecting in terms of policy areas. So with the right to foods, which is one of the parts of the substantive parts of the right to a healthy environment. There was a big public campaign to get that in cluded, within the Good Food Nation apps, and Scottish Government opted not to do that, saying that it would be included as part of the GMO rights bill. And I think, you know, there's a risk that there needs to be a more more coherence in terms of like how different parts of legislation work with one another. And, again, like, having it in law is important. But then we also need to have those access to justice reforms so that it's possible to enforce these rights. And that goes to the UN CRC as well, in terms of access to justice and having effective remedies. So I think that's the most important thing to be honest.

**Lucy Miller** 29:25

Brilliant. Just before it, we've got one more question in the chat box, I'm just going to ask resubmitted question actually, which did come to one of your points about the relationship between environmental rights and other fundamental rights. So the right to a healthy environment is deeply intertwined with other human rights as we know, can you discuss the relationship between environmental rights and other rights such as the right to health, water and food?

**Benji** 29:55

Yeah, sure. So I think, as I mentioned, already, the right to food is a good thing. Alcohol where it's something which we think is very important to have as part of the right to a healthy environment, because it relates to the other substantive features. So agriculture, we see, we know there's impacts in terms of water pollution, with effluence, from livestock, kind of polluting water courses. And also air pollution from ammonia. But again, as obviously, all of the health dimensions of our food system, which needs to be taken into account. And then of course, there's the fact that the rights of food is due to be incorporated in the human rights bill as part of ISS SCA, the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which is also very significant, and really foregrounds questions around access and distribution, which is somewhat distinct, but then nevertheless, still related to the sustainability concerns of the food system. So I think, obviously, we need to have a much more holistic approach when it comes to policymaking. And think about these issues, not in terms of like, dichotomies, or policy sides, but recognise how, yeah, there's a certain needs to recognise, you know, different priorities and how they're brought together. And in terms of policy, and I think it's also important that the these different rights Yeah. Although attentive to both social justice considerations, in terms of universalism, with access, in terms of services, in terms of responding to different needs of individuals who might have particular unmet needs, and, and then also think about these environmental dimensions and the impact it has in terms of air water lands, and the quality of the broader environment which we all inhabit.

**Lucy Miller** 32:25

Thank you. Another question from the chat here is, we know that very various gypsy traveller sites are located either near or on top of political and toxic sites, and the highlands. And one community is located on top of a former landfill site. The council claims that the site was cleared and made safe or for the site, but is that really ever possible? And what routes justice can these communities take?

**Benji** 32:57

That's a really sorry, I would

**Lucy Miller** 32:59

say I assume that means right now, as well in routes to justice that we already have.

**Benji** 33:06

Yeah, that's a really great question. And a really good example of environmental injustice and a breach of environmental rights, really, you know, it really foregrounds how marginalised groups often bear the brunt of environmental pollution, and how what public authorities may often kind of consider the needs and rights of such groups as kind of secondary and an afterthought, or, you know, may claim to have been taking action, but there's been a breach of trust. And there's, there's still concerns which may not be fully addressed in terms of their response to the public authorities. So I think in terms of this particular example, but it also applies to other cases where communities might not feel like their voices being heard. There's obviously different routes to remedy. And, you know, in terms of the political process, and in terms of legal process, so obviously, the political process, you know, there's there's the standard routes in terms of right to MSPs, counsellors and so on and so forth. But I guess I would speak more to the legal side of things, partly because that's very much what the environmental rights centre with Scotland is about. So one thing I would recommend is getting in touch with us we have a free advice service, which can provide support to individuals and communities in terms of the best routes to remedy in these sorts of situations. And it's a bit like the Citizens Advice Bureau, but for environmental matters, so if people may be concerned about particular issue, but don't really know the best course of action to address it. That's the sort of thing we can help with. And I would really urge anyone to get in touch with us if that's the case. In terms of this particular example, there's a couple of options. So there's a environmental watchdog we have in Scotland called environmental standards Scotland. And we've worked with a number of communities to submit representations, to this watchdog based on complaints from members of the public. And it means that if there's particular areas of pollution, or contamination or kind of failures in regulation and policy, we can write to them and they have enforcement powers who can push the government to act. And if they agree, once they've completed their investigation, that there's a problem, which hasn't been sufficiently addressed. Some recent cases that we've followed up on have included the enforcement of licences for water quality and breaches of licences, where there's been instances of pollution, and also around bathing water, and how bathing water designation occurs in Scotland to ensure that, again, there's regular monitoring, testing for water quality. So yeah, appealing to this environmental watchdog is one option. But there's also the option of legal action if there's consistent failure to engage and take action based on the concerns raised by community members. And we obviously, would try to provide support in terms of legal routes to remedy to hold the government to account in that case or the council, if there are really unmet concerns around pollution and safety, which are failing, and members of that community. So yeah, that would be around, you know, accessing the funding to take forward a court case. So it might be legal aid, if that was an option, or, or other sources and in terms of having a solicitor be able to provide support, assembling the evidence needed to take forward a case. And also in the future, we're hoping to establish ourselves as the first as a the only Environmental Law Centre within Scotland so that we can take on cases directly to represent individuals and communities who have being adversely impacted by environmental harm. So I think there's going to be an opening to take forward more and more of these cases. But again, it really is impacted by the extortionate cost of going into court at the moment and these legal expenses. So the priority we have is to eliminate and reduce some of these legal expenses. So it will be much easier for communities to have a legal route to remedy.

**Lucy Miller** 38:01

Brilliant, thanks, Benji. Just in my last couple of minutes, we don't have any more questions from the chat. But I'm just going to ask one more question and exploit my position as chair. Do you think that the right to a healthy environment along with other human rights is well understood by the public in Scotland? What steps can be taken to improve awareness? If not, and ensure a better implementation of rates? And whose job would you say that is, as well, to better inform the public?

**Benji** 38:31

Yeah, it's a good question. So I think, intuitively, people do have an understanding that, you know, there's real issues in terms of how our environment has been treated, and the implications that has in terms of our health and well being, obviously, we've seen massive protests in recent years around the climate, but also nature, and I think there's real vivid examples of communities rallying to you know, save local woodlands or green spaces where people do really have a clear understanding of their environmental rights, essentially, even though it might not frame it in that way. So they have an intuitive understanding. But I think the difficulty is, again, people not knowing how to exercise those rights, and yet not having kind of clarity of being able to understand some of these more systemic issues. And, again, there's been like a real failure in terms of communication to to really articulate that in the public sphere. So we know there's a huge unmet demand for environmental justice across Scotland and we've had over 250 inquiries to our advice service last couple of years since we've been going which really highlights that that there is broad pop concern around the environment. And these queries have come not only from the Central Bank of Scotland from everyone Glasgow, but from all areas of Scotland, including the most disadvantaged areas. So yeah, I think that's really significant. But as I mentioned, it's about how to exercise those rights, which more work is needed to communicate that and about the procedural elements that I mentioned earlier on, there's uncertainty about how to enforce the rights, who's responsible for which policy, and how people can get that route to remedy which, there currently hasn't really been public awareness, outreach campaigns do to do that on a kind of mass level at national level. So I think that's really critical. And I think, you know, there's responsibility for all of civil society to do that work together, and have these conversations, like we're having now to recognise how environmental and human rights are very much related. But obviously, there's also a duty that I think needs to be there's a responsibility for both the media, the government, and you know, we'll figure to kind of have a public profile to be the champions of the right to a healthy environment and to really ensure that it remains part of like the national conversation and that it's not just pushed to the sidelines because it actually does have a fundamental importance for for all of our lives in Scotland.

**Lucy Miller** 41:42

Brilliant, thank you so much, and what a good note to end on. Thank you again, Benji, and environmental rights Centre for Scotland for joining us today. And thanks to all of you for taking some time out of your lunch to join us as well. Please visit our web website HRC, Scotland, to see our upcoming events. And we hope to see you at something soon. Thank you.

**Benji** 42:03

Thanks for having me.

42:06

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