

Carlos Serra:

[00:00:00] Hello, friend. Well, I'll try, although I'm not too fond of talking about myself. My name is Carlos Serra, and I'm an environmental activist. My academic background is in law, with specialization in environmental law, urban planning, and territorial management. I'm a founding member of the environmental education cooperative "Repensar," dedicated to environmental advocacy, zero waste initiatives, circular economy, environmental education, and resilience-building strategies against climate change, along with safeguarding sensitive ecosystems.

[00:01:00] I believe the Zero Waste approach is excellent. It's a grassroots movement beginning at smaller administrative or political units, involving citizen movements, neighborhoods, municipalities, and cities. At national and international levels, efforts are ongoing but still far from achieving significant waste reduction and transition to a circular economy.

I think such grassroots movements have a higher potential for success in realities like Mozambique and generally in Southern countries. Crucial to this is raising awareness among potential leaders to firmly embrace and advance such initiatives.

[00:02:00] It's also important to understand that in countries like ours, the primary concern is simply where to put waste, rather than transforming it into wealth or transitioning into a zero-waste economy that drastically reduces our ecological footprint. Currently, if we talk to municipalities in Mozambique, their concerns revolve around securing funds to build sanitary landfills, closing open-air dumps, or acquiring more waste transport vehicles.

[00:03:00] Thus, there's a downstream perspective rather than an upstream one. I'm 100% in favor of certification schemes as they serve as motivating mechanisms. Certification could be particularly effective in smaller municipalities as pilot initiatives before scaling to larger urban areas, which face greater challenges and barriers.

Certification undoubtedly provides positive visibility, incentivizes, motivates, and attracts sustainable, eco-friendly businesses.

[00:04:00] I believe technology can completely revolutionize product packaging. It's vital we evolve in design, significantly reducing unnecessary elements. Currently, we have multiple packaging layers, even for non-food items. A technological revolution is necessary to either eliminate unnecessary components or replace harmful components with environmentally benign alternatives.

[00:05:00] Technology also plays a crucial role in educating and sensitizing citizens, leveraging widely accessible online solutions. Any innovation that ensures greater public engagement is highly beneficial.

However, what worries me the most are powerful capital lobbies resistant to change. Recent policy shifts during Trump's administration in the United States are not promising. Meanwhile, many countries and multinational companies continue to resist sustainable practices, prioritizing profit over environmental sustainability.

[00:06:00] Sorry for the background noise, but there's a car nearby whose alarm is going off.

[00:06:00] In Mozambique, multinational brands are pervasive and inconsistent; their actions do not align with their proclaimed sustainability goals.

[00:07:00] Successes primarily come from a new generation, more concerned and informed than the previous. The younger generation, now educated and informed, demands change and makes more sustainable choices. This urgent transition will be driven by this generation.

[00:08:00] For instance, Danone, a French multinational with factories worldwide, shows zero commitment to countries where it only exports products. Consequently, nations importing Danone products are left managing the resulting waste. Danone's waste even reaches the most remote beaches worldwide, including Mozambique, despite local consumption being limited to a small upper-middle class.

Investigating frequent beach litter identified unique caps from 9-liter water containers produced by Danone Indonesia, used primarily on boats globally. Exposing companies like Danone is crucial, as is challenging companies like Coca-Cola, which falsely claim sustainability while continuing mass production of plastic packaging, proposing inadequate recycling targets as solutions. Ultimately, such waste ends up everywhere.