

# Solidarity Economy News

*Building Human Solidarity to Sustain Life*

**Newsletter No. 2 2012**

## contents



*Township*

The ANC held a policy conference in June, after being South Africa's ruling party for almost two decades.

There are many ideas and policy perspectives up for discussion but the 'big idea' framing the discussion is captured in a 47-page long document entitled: 'The Second Transition? Building a National Democratic Society and the Balance of Forces in 2012'.

For many militants of the ANC (including its 'socialist desk' called the SACP) this confirms the 'Polokwane left shift' of the ANC, the big leap beyond the first stage of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). This is both a superficial, self serving and propagandistic reading of a very ambitious document and proposition now watered down.

**Vishwas Satgar**  
(Chairperson, COPAC)

(This editorial is continued on page 2)

### **Editorial** 2

The Second Phase of the Transition:  
Another Dead-End? 2

### **National News** 4

Local Initiative Provides Alternative to Mining:  
The Story of Simbhademe - People, Place and  
Possibility 4

### **International News** 5

Rosa Luxemburg Seminar on Solidarity Economy,  
Rural Development and Climate Change Held in  
Zimbabwe; June 14-15, 2012 5

Occupy Wall Street Starts Focusing on Worker  
Cooperatives 6

A New Era in Workplace Justice 7

The Jackson Plan: A Struggle for Self-Determination,  
Participatory Democracy, and Economic Justice in  
Mississippi, US 7

### **The Food Sovereignty Campaign** 8

Cape Town's Kind Green Revolution 8

AFRA Works for Food Security in KwaZulu-Natal 9

Tips on Nurturing Our Food Plants, from Seed to  
Seedling 11

Do you have any farming tips and suggestions to share  
with others? 13

### **Activist Resources to Build the Solidarity Economy Movement From Below** 14

Food Sovereignty Resources 14

Tips for using the internet for activism Part 2:  
Setting up and using an email account 15

### **Contact Details** 20

## Editorial

### The Second Phase of the Transition: Another Dead-End?

By Vishwas Satgar (Chairperson, COPAC)

Almost twenty years into postapartheid democracy, the degeneration of the ANC prompts us to ask deeper questions about what the ANC is really about. Can it still be a vehicle for the emancipation of South Africa, for a 'second transition'? To use its own discourse, does the ANC believe that its leadership of the 'first transition' was such a great success? Does the ANC really believe it inspires confidence amongst a substantial majority such that it has the moral authority and legitimacy to take South Africa forward for another 30-50 years? Or was talk of a second transition a desperate rhetorical move to confront a deepening crisis of internal cohesion and wider political legitimacy? This contribution seeks to situate the ANC's conversation of a 'second transition' in the context of what the ANC is today.

#### Does the ANC Have All the Answers for South Africa?

The ANC does believe, despite the existence of the SACP and given its own Marxist-Leninist schooling, that it is the real vanguard of the people and the 'working class'. By implication it has the monopoly on answers for the way forward, and as an extension of this Leninist faith, the state is a crucial instrument for bringing about change. In fact, 18 years of neoliberal rule confirm a poverty in the ANC's understanding of transformation and the failure of the state to be the 'magic wand' of change. Ironically, the ANC has engaged in deep globalisation of the South African economy exposing the state to the 'discipline' of international markets and limiting its autonomy. The only way around this challenge is to bring the people genuinely into the transformation process from below. However, this is not a central dimension of the politics envisaged in the second transition. Moreover, the distance between the ANC and the grassroots has widened such that the ANC branch is not necessarily the expression of grassroots politics.

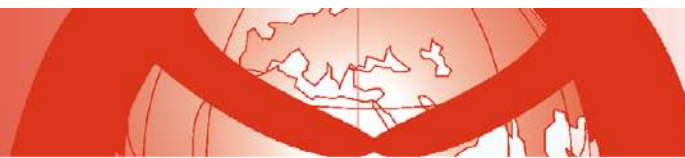
There is a common sense understanding in South Africa that one of the strengths of the tri-partite alliance is that it assists in enhancing debate, sharpening policy perspectives and supplying answers to challenges facing the country. The ANC is meant to embody the collective wisdom of this creature. Unfortunately, this is a naïve understanding of the tri-partite alliance. Moreover, it tends to suggest the alliance is locked into a division of political roles: the ANC governs, the SACP is the conscience and COSATU holds mass power. The reality

today is that the alliance is a battle ground for personal and factional interests that spill over into the state. When the SACP's leaders declare that 'the 1996 class project' is alive and well in the ANC, whose interests does this serve? When COSATU calls on its members to 'swell the ranks of the ANC' whose interests does this serve? Today, overlapping membership in the Alliance has become the greatest weakness of the ANC given that it creates confusion and instability; political debate in the Alliance is factionalised and it is increasingly a cacophony of self-interested noise. It seems the ANC's second transition will continue this noise and instability because there is no conception of the ANC remaking its political relations over the next 30-50 years in its document and conversation.

While the ANC still talks about resolving the legacies of colonialism and apartheid, South Africa's economy and society are in the grip of a deepening crisis that is exacerbating race, class, gender and ecological contradictions. This is a direct result of the ANC choosing to play the 'globalisation game' by adopting, to an even greater extent than the National Party, neoliberal restructuring that has made South Africa vulnerable to the changing circumstances of the global crisis. What started as financial collapse in the rich countries has now become a conjunctural crisis of neoliberalism (although the world's ruling elites are not willing to surrender market-based policies favouring transnational capital) and a deeper civilizational crisis (interlocking of systemic factors preventing the reproduction of human and non-human life). While the ANC's document eludes to 'civilisational crisis' and 'multiple dimensions of the crisis' the most it calls for is 'shared growth' and 'regulated markets'; social democracy redux!

#### The Growing Legitimacy Deficit: Why the NDR is not the Direct Route to Emancipation?

For many South Africans our unfinished political transition was the first dead-end brought about by ANC leadership. Instead of implementing the policies for which it was elected, and for which many South Africans sacrificed, the ANC chose to implement policies that secured the confidence of global capital and Black Economic Empowerment to serve elite formation. Widespread social protests, whether indicative of the 'rebellion of the poor' or not, are about profound discon-



tent with state failure, rampant corruption and lack of service delivery. Such protests are widening and becoming increasingly violent in their expression of grassroots anger. The split in the ANC after the Polokwane conference and the formation of COPE further undermined the legitimacy of the ANC. As a newcomer to the political scene and despite serious limitations, COPE secured a dramatic foothold in the political system with 7.4% of the national vote in 2009. In the same election the ANC lauded its near two-thirds majority, but a closer look reveals that its share of the total electorate in fact declined from 53.8% in 1994 to 38.8% in 2009. At the same time, 12.1 million (40.3% of eligible voters) did not vote at all.

In the 2011 local government elections the DA experienced a general increase in support, while the ANC lost voters across the country except in Kwazulu-Natal. The DA's demand for a youth wage subsidy challenges one of the most important pillars of ANC legitimacy amongst the working class: the social grant system that reaches 15 million South Africans. This does not mean the youth wage subsidy is the solution. With the ANC failing to create jobs, the role of social grants in feeding the material roots of ANC legitimacy cannot be underestimated and the challenge the youth wage subsidy poses to this has to be understood.

Another crucial factor in the legitimacy crisis facing the ANC is its failure to deepen democracy during the 'first transition' to political freedom. Attacks on the judiciary's independence, staffing the upper echelons of the police and intelligence agencies with Zuma cronies, attacks on the media through the infamous 'secrecy bill' and the proposed media tribunal and the traditional leaders bill, inter alia, raise profound concerns about the ANC's commitment to democracy. The street politics accompanying this display an authoritarian face of the ANC (as protestors reach for 'machine guns' against artists etc.) while also exposing a shallow commitment to non-racialism and democracy.

A final strand in the legitimacy crisis facing the ANC is the manner in which it seeks to control the union movement. COSATU has an impeccable national and international record of defending and advancing democratisation. However, the increasing populist authoritarianism of the ANC is also undermining the credibility of COSATU's commitment to democratisation. COSATU is increasingly called upon to defend the indefensible in the eyes of the people. Moreover, the political independence of COSATU is being undermined as union leaders are being drawn into cabinet positions in government, union investment companies are locked into BEE deals, the

ANC government responds violently to civil society protest action and unions themselves undermine traditions of worker control. COSATU is at a crucial crossroads and internal union battles, both at the recent NUM Congress and most likely at the next COSATU elective conference, will reveal how the ANC (working in cahoots with the SACP) finds it absolutely necessary to control COSATU to safeguard its influence and legitimacy amongst the organised working class. COSATU would do well not to let ANC vanguardism substitute for independent working class leadership and worker control of unions.

### **Second Transition to What?**

When squared up with reality of what the ANC is about today, the noble sounding rhetoric of the second transition document comes unstuck. The ANC does not have the answers to confront the challenges of crisis-ridden global capitalism, its legitimacy crisis is deepening and it is showing signs of growing authoritarianism. This prompts a crucial question: 'second transition' to what? If the ANC genuinely believes that the content of the second transition is to address economic transformation then it is rather remarkable how its document is bereft of a serious analysis of the neoliberalisation of South Africa and its implications for the state, the accumulation model, class formation, civil society and international relations. It skirts social realities that the ANC was responsible for constituting and merely reduces 18 years of neoliberalisation to a tactical difference amongst Alliance alliance partners. Without such a critical understanding of South Africa's political economy one can only conclude that the ANC's transition to a national democratic society is one in which the 'spectre of capital' looms large.

This is further confirmed by formulations on the dimensions of what constitute a 'national democratic society'. These are shot through with a narrow liberal understanding of freedom and representative democracy, a conception of social capital emptied of an understanding of power relations, a state that hovers above class contradictions to regulate class conflict and a productivist conception of economic change; more growth and industrial jobs. All of this is rather outdated, overtaken by globalising capital and the total crisis of capitalism today and certainly not the 'best that human civilisation has to offer'. The ANC today is not the place where new Left thinking, imaginings and propositions are developing. It would seem the much vaunted 'second transition' is likely to be another dead end.



## National News

### Local Initiative Provides Alternative to Mining: The Story of Simbhademe

- People, Place and Possibility *By Sandy Heather*

There are so many ethical questions in the world today but one of the biggest regards the 'rightness' of imposing one worldview/value system/socio-economic model on another. When the dominant forces are so overwhelming how does a rural amaMpondo community attract 'development' that is in keeping with their integrity, who they are and what they stand for when their needs are so different from those that 'government' and 'corporates' think they should be satisfying?

But the concept of 'development' does exist in integrity and it is alive and well in a number of small grassroots organisations and their programmes. Thanks to initiatives like this solidarity economy newsletter these initiatives can be networked to become a powerful force of alternative development that is built now and can replace the 'old order' when it collapses.

As one of the solutions to rural development needs in Pondoland we have been running a highly successful pilot Local Economic Development (LED) programme (in line with ecological principles) for the last 3 years. 'We' are the local people of the area assisted by Sustaining the Wild Coast (SWC), an NGO established to support local thinking and needs. The programme incorporates personal development, skills acquisition, knowledge development, understanding, relationships, networking, micro-projects and mentoring driven at a grassroots level with no complicated imposition of structures and paperwork which 2nd economy/inclusive economy/solidarity economy people should not have to face. It is designed within the amaPondo cultural system, conducted in the local language, nested in African spirituality and sanctioned by the Queen of the amaPondo.

Simbhademe (so named by the participants and meaning 'we discover' in amaPondo) has been designed through total participation by local people. The consultation came *before* and *during* the design, not as in many cases where consultation comes *after* decisions have been made. After the design stage 5 representatives were elected by their communities from each of 6 villages to participate directly in the programme.

A deeply divided, hurt and angry group of people (largely due to the threat of mining on their lands) have developed a sense of kinship, learned to listen to each other and respect differences and have focused on positive initiatives that bring them together rather than separate them. Whilst the issues in the area are by no means resolved, the focus is now on building things up rather than breaking things down and warring factions are communicating on a new level. People have developed within themselves and in their relationships with others because of the growth in their levels of self-esteem. This was confirmed by an external evaluation of the project, which found participants saying things like 'I felt like a rusty can that had been thrown away when I started Simbhademe but now I feel like I have been recycled and that I have value at last!'. Through this process people have come to define development in ways such as 'Development is a process in which a community of people strives to make it possible for all members to satisfy their basic human needs and enhance the quality of their lives without damaging the environment.'

The external evaluation of the project also states:

*The group also believe they were brought together to meet and work with each other to develop a sense of being a team, of caring deeply for each other, of connecting with and learning about other communities on the Wild Coast and building co-operation and support. Simbhademe has grown to become a core or reference group of thirty inspired and enthusiastic people from six communities with a strong sense they are part of a bigger family.*



**For more information:**

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## International News

### Rosa Luxemburg Seminar on Solidarity Economy, Rural Development and Climate Change Held in Zimbabwe; June 14-15, 2012

Imagine you are a (young) man or woman living in rural Zimbabwe, you have finished secondary school like most Zimbabweans or even tertiary education but are nevertheless unemployed. You are contemplating how you can shape your future.

Of course, first Zimbabwe's political problems will have to be resolved, but what then? Are you going to rush (back) to town in a futile attempt to get a job in a continuing neo-liberal global crisis-ridden rat race with the other 80+% unemployed Zimbabweans? Or are you going to try and look for opportunities in your own village or district?

Assume that you have decided to do the latter. Are you then going to look for opportunities for yourself (trying to become a small farmer, miner, tour guide, trader, business man or otherwise) or are you going to organise with friends and family and see what you can achieve together based on principles of solidarity and sustainability? An extra complication of course will be that after the failure of the Climate Conference, COP17, in December 2012 in Durban, it has become clear that climate change is inevitable and that in particular agriculture and other natural resource based sectors like fisheries and tourism will increasingly suffer from rising temperatures of 2°C and more.

Daunting challenge, not so? But it can be overcome - the only question is how.

The above matters were the basis of a two-day workshop in Harare, Zimbabwe in June of this year, organised by SEATINI (Southern and Eastern African Trade, Information and Negotiations Institute), Harare and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Johannesburg. Rural people (farmers, NGOs and CBOs, civil servants and traditional leaders), mostly from Masvingo and Binga, met with a mix of experts, activists and government and non-government employees to take a first step and look deeper into the combined concepts of rural development, climate change and solidarity economy.

Quite a few participants got initially overwhelmed by their enhanced insight that climate change is directly threatening their very existence. For many it was a good reminder how in the eighties ex-combatants had started collective cooperatives based on strong fundamentals of socialist thinking and solidarity. It was felt that too many

of these ideas and practices, including that none but ourselves can bring about development, have been abandoned over the years under the onslaught of neo-liberal structural adjustment programmes. However, they are again more relevant than ever, the more as the 'free market' has no solutions for the global crisis it has caused.

Generally, participants got encouraged and enthused by the prospect that a solidarity economy, as difficult as it is to pursue, offers a (the only?) way out. Since the seminar, several follow-up initiatives have already been taken up like in Mwenezi where a first district-wide action oriented workshop on climate change and rural solidarity economy is being organised. So, what is holding you back?

A report of the seminar and some of the presentations can be found at the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation website [www.rosalux.co.za](http://www.rosalux.co.za) or requested from Jos Martens at [Jos@rosalux.co.za](mailto:Jos@rosalux.co.za) or [j.martens.sa@gmail.com](mailto:j.martens.sa@gmail.com)



## Editor's Note:

*In the context of the global crisis, cooperatives are increasingly coming to the fore as solutions to reviving people's economies, creating and protecting jobs, and illustrating more just ways to collectively organise our lives, economies and societies. That is, the solidarity economy. The Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement in America was an initial reaction by angry, energetic and hopeful people to the destruction caused in their lives, millions of Americans' lives, and millions of peoples lives all over the world's, lives. But it is now also organising for an alternative economic and social model based on cooperation and solidarity.*

*The first article below describes OWS's focus on cooperatives as integral to a new economic future, and the second describes an attempt by workers to take over a factory, supported by OWS.*

## Occupy Wall Street Starts Focusing on Worker Cooperatives

Most of us have had a healthy interest in coops before meeting. In talking with each other and working on solutions for the problems Occupy Wall Street has brought to the public's attention, we see the connection with coops.

Businesses behaving badly is what got us into this mess, and we want business to behave cooperatively.

We want to see coops created out of Occupy Wall St.

The first one to take shape is Occucopy which created an alternative to compete against the Wall St owned Staples for the printing needs of Occupy Wall St.

This is a concrete example of a solution to the problem. Occucopy is a worker-owned business. The equity of the business is shared according to how much each worker works at the coop, not how much money someone has to invest in it.

We want to see more businesses like Occucopy arise from Occupy Wall St.

Other folks involved with us are looking to create a cooperative kitchen, a IT coop, and a silk-screening coop.

We are hoping to help see these businesses created and have each one of them help create more businesses by funding a loan fund.

This model is learned from the cooperative movement in Argentina and folks directly involved in Argentina's coop movement are working with us here at Occupy Wall St.

Overall, we want to see a more equitable and cooperative world where people are not exploited by business.

**Article Source:** <http://occupy.coop/about/>





## **A New Era in Workplace Justice**

Workers from the former Republic Windows & Doors factory in Chicago, United States have formed the New Era Windows Cooperative and are appealing to current factory owner Serious Energy to let them pay a fair price for equipment that will otherwise be sold off as scrap metal.

For any rational thinker, the choice between giving experienced workers a shot to save dozens of high tech green manufacturing jobs and ripping apart another U.S. factory would seem to be a no-brainer. However, the narrow logic of investment capital does not necessarily follow what would be best for us, you know, as human beings and fellow citizens.

Fortunately, the workers of New Era have provided us with a blueprint for how to fight for the right to work. When Republic closed its doors and tried to screw the workers in 2008, they occupied the factory, gained widespread public and political support, and won both due compensation and the chance to keep their jobs under a new owner. When Serious tried to again sell the factory off for scrap in 2012, the workers resisted again and have thus far prevented the fire sale that would have otherwise taken place. Message one here is that resistance CAN work! Message two is that when investors try to sell off a good factory, worker buyouts should ALWAYS be on the table. More widespread public and political support for this option could go a long way to making it a reality!

The New Era Windows workers have also shown us a new way to relate to unions. Partnering with the laudable United Electrical Union (<http://www.ueunion.org/>), they have found a new way for cooperatives and unions to fight side by side for workplace justice. In the face of widespread downturns in union membership, this innovative relationship is a must for reinvigorating and empowering labor struggles in the United States. And coming on the heels of the recent Union Coop Model (<http://assets.usw.org/our-union/coops/The-Union-Coop-Model-March-26-2012.pdf>) proffered by Mondragón, the world's largest worker cooperative, and UAW, one of the United States' most prominent unions, the New Era-UE partnership looks more and more like an emerging blueprint for how to stop unjust closures and put the focus back on quality working opportunities in the 21st century!

**Article Source:** <http://occupy.coop/2012/07/18/a-new-era-in-workplace-justice/>

## **The Jackson Plan: A Struggle for Self-Determination, Participatory Democracy, and Economic Justice in Mississippi, US**

A major progressive initiative is underway in Jackson, Mississippi in the United States. This initiative demonstrates tremendous promise and potential in making a major contribution toward improving the overall quality of life of the people of Jackson, Mississippi, particularly people of African descent. This initiative is the *Jackson Plan* and it is being spearheaded by the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (MXGM) and the Jackson People's Assembly.

The Jackson Plan is an initiative to apply many of the best practices in the promotion of participatory democracy, solidarity economy, and sustainable development and combine them with progressive community organizing and electoral politics. The objectives of the Jackson Plan are to deepen democracy in Mississippi and to build a vibrant, people-centred solidarity economy in Jackson and throughout the state of Mississippi that empowers Black and other oppressed peoples in the state.

The Jackson Plan has many local, national and international antecedents, but it is fundamentally the brain child of the Jackson People's Assembly. The Jackson People's Assembly is the product of the Mississippi Disaster Relief Coalition (MSDRC) that was spearheaded by MXGM in 2005 in the wake of Hurricane Katrina's devastation of Gulf Coast communities in Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama and Texas. Between 2006 and 2008, this coalition expanded and transformed itself into the Jackson People's Assembly. In 2009, MXGM and the People's Assembly were able to elect human rights lawyer and MXGM co-founder Chokwe Lumumba to the Jackson City Council, representing Ward 2 of the city. The Jackson Plan is a major initiative in the effort to deepen democracy and build a solidarity economy and ultimately aims to build a strong people, prepared to improve their future and seize their own destiny.

**To read more about the Jackson Plan, go to <http://www.socialistproject.ca/bullet/664.php> #continue**

## The Food Sovereignty Campaign

### Cape Town's Kind Green Revolution

*An article written by Western Cape NACOSA magazine in 2009 and updated by Rob Small, Abalimi co-director, 2012*

A voluntary association, Abalimi was founded in 1983. It is an urban agriculture and environmental action association, working to improve sustainable food production and environmental greening amongst the poor in Cape Town. In particular the project targets women mothers and grandmothers who often represent whole families. 'Abalimi' means 'the farmers' in isi-Xhosa, the predominant language of their target community.



### Helping People Survive

The foundation of ABALIMI's target group are pure survivalists, who 'temporarily' engage in vegetable production at home until a 'job comes along'. But by supporting such individuals organic gardening culture is now becoming a permanent feature of the urban environment among the poor in Cape Town. The skills learned by survival and subsistence gardeners remain with them, even if they stop 'when they get a job' and can be drawn upon again in future.

ABALIMI also supports individual households and groups to implement their own gardening and micro-farming projects. This includes between approx 2500 home based vegetable gardens and 70-100 community group projects (school gardens, community allotment gardens, communal gardens) per annum.

It runs two People's Garden Centres, in Nyanga and Khayelitsha, which supply free advice, information and subsidised gardening inputs such as trees, groundcovers, soil improvers (e.g. manure), seed, seedlings, basic tools, windbreaks and safe pest control remedies. Up to 1000 people are trained each year plus year-round on-site technical follow-up support visits and demonstrations to projects.

### Social benefits are enhanced through activities such as:

- Mutual help work events to accomplish large or difficult tasks.
- Horizontal (farmer to farmer) learning events.
- Savings mobilisation.

Abalimi also engages in indigenous tree planting, mainly in community gardens as windbreaks, but also in community institutions such as educares, community centres and schools. It has also established the Manyanani, 'we do it together', Peace Park - a unique community and environmental centre - and Moya we Khaya 'spirit of home', a pan-African intergenerational cultural community home, which gives everyone a healthy and related place in the community and in nature. Abalimi has also been recognised with numerous awards, and its community gardens were the first to have proven that at least two sustainable family livelihoods can be created on 1000m<sup>2</sup> of land.



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### Home Gardens

The Home Garden Movement, also known as 'Individual Membership sign-up' campaign, is asking individuals in the townships of Khayelitsha, Philippi, Nyanga, Crossroads, and many more to sign up for a one year membership for R30. In return the individual gets training on how to start a garden and how to grow vegetables, a starter-kit (enough for two seasons) worth R60, and constant access to follow up at the Garden Centres, to get answers and help for growing vegetables at home.

### Harvest of Hope

Since 2007 surplus produce from subsistence gardens has been sold to the wider market outside of the townships on a weekly basis. Launched in 2008, the Harvest of Hope project collects, packs and delivers organic vegetable boxes to families in Cape Town. This project offers regular income security to the community farmers, by contracting them to grow seasonal organic produce at guaranteed prices. Customers also have the knowledge that their money is giving people jobs and conserving the environment through local organic farming among the poor.

Harvest of Hope is now producing more than a 300 of these extraordinary vegetable boxes per week, from 100 farmers in 20-30 community gardens, every Tuesday. The medium term aim is to increase to 300 farmers and 1200 boxes.

#### For more information contact:

marketing@abalimi.org.za or visit  
www.harvestofhope.co.za

### AFRA Works for Food Security in KwaZulu-Natal

**Editor's Note** - As part of building a coalition of organisations to build food sovereignty in South Africa, COPAC is reaching to NGOs that are also working under the banner of food security. As was discussed in the first issue of the newsletter, food sovereignty and food security are quite different. Food security only asks whether people have enough food to eat. Food sovereignty, on the other hand, asks who produces food, how food is produced, who benefits etc. In other words, it looks more deeply at building democracy in the food system by building people's control over it in order to overcome food insecurity.

Many organizations are working under the theme of food security, which has the potential to develop in line with building local resilience and independence in terms of food. This could become a food sovereignty approach.



With approximately 80% of rural communities served by AFRA (Association for Rural Advancement) living below the formally-established 'poverty line', and with the threat of global warming looming over the little agriculture that these communities undertake to augment their incomes, AFRA has since 2009 entered the programme area of food security.

A pilot study undertaken since 2009 on the Shayizandla and Goudina farms of the Greytown area was independently evaluated in mid-2011, and its success was so encouraging that it is intended that food security will become part of the overall operational plan conducted throughout the areas which AFRA serves, beginning in the Amajuba area as well as being further developed in Greytown. AFRA's food security interventions had initially been located in the Greytown area and were initiated through two pilot projects on the Goudina (13 households) and Shayizandla (28 households) farms. These pilot projects saw an increase in homestead food production and the enthusiastic engagement and participation of the local communities in the project. These encouraging outcomes have led AFRA to expand its activities in Goudina whilst also beginning interventions in eMphlopheni.

Interventions at eMphlopheni (47 households) emerged due to the restitution of an area of land to people who were previously evicted under the *apartheid* government. However, since the restitution there has been an absence of post-settlement support from the government. This has prevented the people from engaging in agriculture and achieving sustainable livelihoods. AFRA thus intervened to assist the community and to develop their agricultural skill and capacity whilst also helping to establish the necessary farm infrastructure.

In the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods AFRA focuses on interventions that create benefits at the homestead level, promote farming practices which are low in external inputs, increase production through increasing intensification and efficiency, and promote crops and methods that are environmentally sustainable.

AFRA's existing interventions have so far provided promising results and have encouraged the expansion of its work. The pilot projects in Goudina and Shayizandla saw the following results:

- Provision of training workshops to 70 people from some 40 households;
- Increased number of households cultivating gardens;
- Increased levels and diversity of food production; and
- Increased consumption, improved nutrition and increased stability of food supply to households.



The original interventions in Goudina have expanded to include a livestock project focusing on the keeping of goats. Community members have received training regarding technical aspects of herd management as well as health care for livestock. This training has been complemented with the introduction of a veterinary kit, nutritional supplements for the livestock and a tagging and registration system.

Due to a lack of natural water sources and the unlikelihood of being provided with water from government, AFRA is attempting to establish a water reticulation system in Goudina. This will provide water for 'multiple use systems' (MUS). AFRA plans to combine existing rainwater harvesting and now reticulation in one system. This will provide a secure back-up option and allow households to manage and determine their own water use according to need. The reticulation system has been formulated through meaningful participation from the community. This process enabled the community to produce a diagram of how the system could operate, which has since been planned and budgeted for by Partners in Development (a water and sanitation NGO).

These options are both unique and innovative and can provide a valuable case study not only for future AFRA work but for broader food security interventions of rural communities in South Africa and further afield.

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## Tips on Nurturing Our Food Plants, from Seed to Seedling



Tarak Kate is an agroecologist and heads up an organisation called Dara Mitra in India, which is aimed at reviving, strengthening and spreading the knowledge and sustainable practice of small farmers in India. He comes to lecture in South Africa once a year, and kindly gave some of his time while he was here this year to share his knowledge and experience in Ivory Park, Johannesburg. To a group of small farmers and food gardeners from Ivory Park Tarak spoke about and showed different experiences of sustainable farming, from South Africa to India, and then those present at the workshop got the chance to learn a bit more about techniques of taking care of seed that have been developed largely through traditional practice of small farmers.

He shared three important techniques:

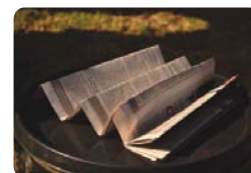
- (i) germination test;
- (ii) nourishing organic seed and protecting from pests and
- (iii) making liquid manure.

### 1. Germination Test

If we plan on planting a large field of a certain, or different, crops, a trouble that might arise is that not all the seeds planted will germinate and grow into plants. This means that we spend the time, effort and money on planting the seeds, but then perhaps only 70% of the field germinates. So in order to ensure that we get as close as possible to 100% of our field germinating, the following simple germination test can be done:

#### Step 1:

Take a piece of newspaper and fold it into zig-zags.



#### Step 2:

Place 10 seeds of the stock of seeds that you plan to plant in each groove.



#### Step 3:

Fold the newspaper by pushing the zig-zags together into a single strip.



#### Step 4:

Holding the strip closed, dip it into some water and take it out.



#### Step 5:

Now place it in a plastic bag and tie the bag closed. Leave for about 7 days.



#### Step 6:

After about 7 days, take the strip of newspaper with the seeds in it out of the bag. Open it up and see how many seeds have germinated. If, for example, 8 out of all ten seeds have germinated, then you know that when you sow your field with the seeds only 80% of that field will germinate. So, now what you can do is increase the concentration of your seed sowing by 20% to try and get a 100% coverage of your field.



## 2. Nourishing your organic seed and protecting it from pests

When we plant seed, we want it to grow into strong, healthy plants. One technique for helping with this is to 'feed' the seed, and to protect it from pests that may eat or damage the seed while it is in the ground. To do this, you can follow this easy method.

### You will need:

- 1 part cow dung
- 2 part cattle urine
- If you can, 1 part anthill or termite mound soil. Be sure only to take soil right from the base of the anthill or termite mound so as not to destroy the actual structure!

### Method:

#### Step 1:

Mix together the above three ingredients to make a paste.



#### Step 2:

Smear this paste onto your seeds



#### Step 3:

Spread the seeds on a piece of newspaper and let them dry in the shade for 10 days.



#### Step 4:

You can then plant the seeds or store them to plant them some other time.



This makes a nice nutritious food for your seeds, and the dung and urine help to keep pests away from the seed. This is very important with organic seeds, because non-organic seeds are usually coated with a chemical that releases into the soil when it is planted, which repels or kills any pests that might damage the seed. But with organic and agroecological food production, we don't want to release harmful chemicals into the soil, so using this method is one way of protecting your seed from pests without using these chemicals.

## 3. Making liquid manure

Now that we have nurtured our seeds, we also want to look after our seedlings once the seeds grow and ensure that they grow into strong and healthy plants (strong and healthy plants are also less likely to be attacked by pests). There are many ways to do this, especially composting the soil, but to add to this we can also make a liquid solution that we can feed the plants with. One technique of making liquid manure developed in India is the following:

### You will need:

- A large container (at least about 20 litres)
- 18 litres of clean water
- 1 kg of cow manure
- A handful of wood ash from the fire
- If you can get, 100g molasses or raw brown sugar (you can buy molasses at the shops; otherwise it is not such a big problem if you cannot get this ingredient)

### Method:

Put all the water into the container. Add the cow manure, the termite mound sand, the cow urine, the wood ash and the molasses (optional). Mix this all together nicely with a stick. Then put a lid on the container and leave it. Be sure to stir it once a day and after about 10 days there should be bubbles on top of the mixture, which means it has fermented. It is now ready to use!

To use it, mix 1 part of the mixture with 10 parts of water, and apply it to your seedlings and plants once a day. (Do not apply the mixture without mixing it with water first, as it will be too strong and can damage your plants).

## Now watch your plants grow!





### **Do you have any farming tips and suggestions to share with others?**

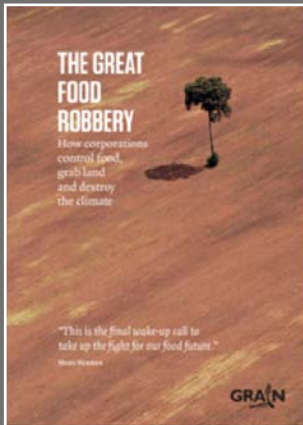
Although Tarak Kate shared with us some useful techniques for looking after our plants that have been developed in India, this does not mean that there is not a lot of existing and traditional knowledge in farming in South Africa, and Africa. It is important that we uncover and strengthen existing farming and agroecological knowledge that already exists and share it as widely as possible.

If you would like to share some tips or knowledge on farming or food sovereignty, we would be very excited to hear about it and share it in this newsletter. To send us your tips you can do one of the following:

- Email Andrew at: [bennieand@gmail.com](mailto:bennieand@gmail.com) or Athish at [copac2@icon.co.za](mailto:copac2@icon.co.za)
- Fax it to: (011) 252 6134
- Post it to: PO Box 1736, Killarney, 2041
- Give us a call on: (011) 447 1013 or 072 278 4315

## Activist Resources to build the Solidarity Economy Movement from Below

### Food Sovereignty Resources



#### New Book:

*The Great Food Robbery: How Corporations Control Food, Grab Land and Destroy the Climate.*

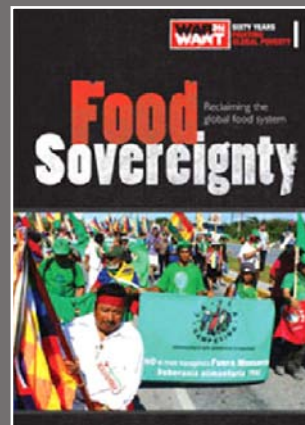
GRAIN has recently announced its new book *The Great Food Robbery: How Corporations Control Food, Grab Land and Destroy the Climate*, just published with Fahamu Books and Pambazuka Press.

The global food system is in profound crisis. Over a billion people suffer from hunger each day, and this number is rising faster than the global population, even though there is more than enough food in the world feed everybody. Climate change, fuelled by a wasteful and polluting industrial food system, threatens to make things much worse. At the same time, corporations are grabbing millions of hectares of farmland and water systems in poor countries, and displacing rural communities.

*The Great Food Robbery* looks at the forces driving the world into this crisis. It focuses on corporations and the ways they organise and control food production and distribution and how this destroys local food systems. It provides information and analysis that will enable and inspire people to take the food system back from corporations and put it in the hands of local communities.

This book brings together much of GRAIN's most recent research and writing and is divided into three sections: agribusiness, the climate crisis and land grabbing.

The book can be ordered from the Pambazuka Press website <http://www.fahamubooks.org>. For ordering bulk copies at discounted rate, please contact Aaron O'Dowling-Keane: [aaron@fahamu.org](mailto:aaron@fahamu.org)



#### Report:

*Food Sovereignty: Reclaiming the Global Food System,* by War On Want

This report is an excellent resource for understanding the nature of the current world system, corporate control over it, hunger, and why this system needs changing. In clear and easy to read language, the report consists of three main themes: the expansion of corporate capitalism over the world food system and its impacts, the food sovereignty alternative, and concrete case studies of places in which food sovereignty is actively being built. It includes examples of collective farming in Mozambique, agroecology in Brazil and 'nature farming' in Sri Lanka. It demonstrates very clearly what food sovereignty is, why it has arisen as an idea and a practice, and how it is being fought for and built in practice from below. And lastly, it assists us in understanding different struggles around the world and to connect them to our own struggles, and demonstrates how the only true and lasting solutions to the world food crisis lie in connected, people-driven struggles and alternatives from below.

It is a great resource to start a food sovereignty reading group with, so download it at:

[Http://www.waronwant.org/news/latest-news/17368-food-soveriegnty-report-launched](http://www.waronwant.org/news/latest-news/17368-food-soveriegnty-report-launched)



## Tips for using the Internet for Activism Part 2: Setting up and using an email account

Email is an important and necessary communication tool in today's digital age. Email is used to exchange messages between people through the Internet and computer networks. By using a desktop computer, laptop or a mobile phone that support WAP and Internet browsing, one can send and receive emails through these devices via the Internet. The great thing about email is that you can send attachments. These attachments could be Word documents, pictures, and presentations. Email is important for activists because they can exchange information and communicate widely, quickly, paperlessly and without cost. If you have a good connection to the Internet through your device you can send and receive emails almost instantly.



### How to Access Email?

In order to access email you will need to create your own personal email account. There are various service providers that provide you free access to an email account via the Internet. Some commonly used service providers are called Gmail, Yahoo and Hotmail, to name a few. We will focus on helping you set up an email account using Gmail. Visit your nearest Internet café or ask a friend or family member who has a device with access to the Internet to help you follow the steps below to open up your own email account.

#### Step 1 - Go to the Gmail website

Using a computer, laptop or mobile device connect to the Internet. Type in [www.gmail.com](http://www.gmail.com) into the URL address bar and press 'Enter' on the keyboard.

#### Step 2 - Follow the instructions to set up account.

Click on 'Create An Account'. You will be prompted to type in:

- Your **first name and surname**.
- **Choose your username**. A username helps give you your own unique email identification or address. Almost like your own barcode in your ID book. Commonly people use their initials and surname, or full name and surname, or nickname and numbers to distinguish their username. For example: [ptmnguni@gmail.com](mailto:ptmnguni@gmail.com) or [palesamnguni@gmail.com](mailto:palesamnguni@gmail.com) or [palie1965@gmail.com](mailto:palie1965@gmail.com). Use whichever one you prefer based on its availability.
- **Create a password**. Enter a password that you will always remember and that you alone will only know. Every time you want to log into Gmail you will have to put in both your username and password, which helps keep your email account protected from other people accessing it. Usually entering words mixed with numbers makes a strong password.
- **Confirm your password**: Re-enter the password you entered above.
- **Birthday**: Enter your date of birth
- **Gender**: Enter your gender.
- **Mobile number**: Enter your mobile number
- **Your current email if you have one already**. This space can be left blank if you don't have one.
- **Prove you are not a robot**: You will see two words in a box, that are written in a funny way. In the box below enter these two words as you see them on the screen.

## Tips for using the Internet for Activism Part 2: Setting up and using an email account

This helps the service provider prevent abuse of their email services from automated programs, also known as 'spam'.

- **Location:** This is usually pre-chosen for you as South Africa.
- **Agree to Google terms and conditions:** Click on the empty box next to this statement to confirm that you agree.
- Finally, click on **next step** to proceed.

### Step 3 - Add a photo of yourself

You will be prompted to add a photo in this screen. Upload your photo if you have one or click next step if you don't have one stored digitally.

### Step 4 - Welcome! Your email has been successfully created.

This is your final step. You should receive a Welcome note to say you have successfully created your Gmail account. Click on continue to Gmail to send your first email.

*Please note that these steps are subject to change by the Google service providers. This is the most current method as accessed in September 2012.*

### Sending an Email

In order to send your first email, click on 'Compose' on the list on the left of the screen. A new screen will come up. Enter the email address you would like to send your message to. Type in a Subject. This is usually a short sentence giving the recipient a short description of what the message relates to. Let us practice sending an email to a friend. Here is the example. Type the following in the required columns:

**To:** copac2@icon.co.za

**Subject:** I am connected to email

Dear COPAC

This is my email address.

Regards  
Palesa

All your emails that you have sent are automatically stored in your Sent items folder. This helps you track and confirm what emails you have sent.

### Receiving Email

All your received emails are stored in your Inbox folder. The first Emails you would have received are from the Gmail team welcoming you and providing additional information on products and services. All future emails that you receive will be stored in the in this Inbox folder automatically.

We hope this information assists you in setting up your email account if you do not already have one.

Happy Emailing!

**Solidarity!**  
**COPAC TEAM**



## **Discussion, Note and Research Page**

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### contact us

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We invite organisations and activists to make contributions to the Newsletter through writing stories, contributing photographs or cultural contributions, such as poetry, art, songs etc.

#### COPAC Contact Details:

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