



SOUTH AFRICAN FOOD SOVEREIGNTY CAMPAIGN

Campaign updates and plan of action for 2018

Greetings Comrades,

After another successful and eventful year of campaigning, it is time to sit back and review some of our achievements from this past year. This final newsletter for the year helps us do this as we highlight some of the recent engagements and events, local campaigning stories and more.

We hope that you enjoy reading this newsletter, and that it inspires you in some or many ways to keep on building food sovereignty in your local spaces.

We also hope that you have a joyous holiday season, filled with an abundance of fresh food, inspiring engagements and rest, so that you are rejuvenated and motivated to continue campaigning for food sovereignty next year, with even more passion.

Finally, thank you for your commitment to food sovereignty, it is your stories and struggles that keep us going. So remember, if you have any stories to share with the rest of the SAFSC community, please send them to info@safsc.org.za and we will gladly include them in our newsletters next year.

Forward to advancing food sovereignty in our local spaces in 2018!



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I. LOCAL CAMPAIGNING

1.1 Support Centre for Land Change - Producers Platform

Anne Plaatjies

There is a different language that's being used to exclude small-scale farmers.

Democracy doesn't work for the poor at all levels - John Rank, Activist and Subsistence Farmer

The 5th Annual Producers Platform

hosted by SCLC, took a critical look at the South African food system, and the implications it has on the livelihoods of small-scale and emerging farmers/producers. Themed “*Democratising our Food System*” activists present unpacked the current trends in the South African agrarian structure, how the market is framed, and the exclusionary principles that keep emerging and struggling farmers, on the periphery. This coupled with the slow and ineffective pace of land reform and the socio- economic and inherited constraints placed on small-scale and subsistence farmers are deepening the food crisis and is ultimately fragmenting communities. Through creative engagement and dialogue, participants unpacked the interplay of land, power and the control of resources and the manner in which



it intersects with food production. The dominant food paradigm was characterised as being unjust and undemocratic; and it also highlights the power dynamics that underpin this system.

Echoes of this undemocratic food system were heard throughout the room, in plenary and group discussions. To change this food system, the keynote speaker noted that we





have to change our engagement with the powerful players dominating the food system. The South African agrarian structure she noted remains highly unequal; to counter this dominant paradigm we will have to create a more inclusive and equal one, which centres farmers and consumers, and not just large corporations. Participants and activists present were challenged with rethinking and reimagining the food system; and to revisit their understanding of what a market should or could be. They were further challenged to seek out alternatives that work for the people; this however, will require that farmers mobilize themselves, profiling themselves in a visible way to respond to their challenges.

The people
must eat
from their
struggle

The produce exhibition session, showcased the various products/produce by local farmers. This exhibition highlighted the indigenous knowledge systems present among the producers and the importance of exchanging this knowledge. It also brought to the fore the need to popularise sovereign production and the possibility of realising a people's economy. A participant noted that "*the people must eat from their struggle*"; the realisation of this statement can only be made through intensive work, which stresses the sophisticated demands of the people, and by creating spaces for people to start imagining alternatives beyond what they see presently.

1.2 Seed Knowledge and Harvest Exchange: Port Elizabeth

Rushka Johnson

On 28 October we held a Seed freedom event in honour of World food day, Seed Freedom, Permaculture, Slow Food, Food Sovereignty and Sustainability. There is an active permaculture community in Port Elizabeth and many garden walkabouts, seed exchanges and talks take place on a continuous basis. In light of the new seed bills that we have been fighting over the last few months, we wanted to combine the public hearings, emails, open

letters and other actions that we had taken part in, with a positive learning and community based exchange of Seed, Knowledge and excess harvest.



Seeing other people's spaces, learning from their achievements and mistakes is a wonderful way of being inspired and enriched. Touching the soil, seeing the seeds on the plants, tasting the food from the soil is a valuable experience. To promote healthy eating, combining tastes, freshness straight from the garden to the plate, Slow food youth PE initiative cooked up a meal with a combination of various harvests and food from the market garden on hand.

Speakers included - Myself who's garden it was held in, a walkabout, raised beds, mulch and looking at plants going to seed, as well as a summary of the Peoples food sovereignty Act. Emma Hay spoke on the magic of liquid gold, the beginning of a compost toilet, free manures and comfrey water.

Rifqah Naidoo spoke on Slow Food Youth Network and the importance of caring where our food comes from, community.

Goodwell Chakanyuka Kufakunesu did a demonstration on a no dig bed and Janet Cherry and co from KwaZakhele Transition Township gave feedback on their latest wonderful projects for sustainability, creating food gardens and building their community.

People brought seed, harvest, seedlings, horse manure, healthy food and knowledge to share.



These kind of events are so important in connecting with our community and fellow seed and Food Growing, Earth Caring humans.

1.3 A Food Sovereignty Victory: The food sovereignty centre at Wits University

Due to challenges of the indignity faced by hungry students over the years, including the handing over of memorandum by INALA/COPAC and SAFSC in 2016, as part of the bread march Wits management committed to handing over the Sanctuary Building to ensure hungry students had a place of dignity. Moreover, Wits agreed to work towards a zero hunger, zero carbon and zero waste university. In this context the Sanctuary Building and the space around it becomes important for constructing a new eco-centric pathway for Wits.

In cooperation with the Wits Citizenship and Community Outreach (WCCO) and the Inala forum for food sovereignty and climate justice at Wits, COPAC will be establishing a Food Sovereignty Research Centre at the Wits. We are excited to announce that Wits management recently allocated the Sanctuary building and the area surrounding it to the project. Plans are now under way to get the space working.

The vision for the centre is to promote food sovereignty at Wits and beyond. The centre will comprise of three spaces, namely a Wits community engagement and eco-demonstration space, a dignity space for students and a food sovereignty support space.



The 'Sanctuary building' will provide students with an ideal space to raise awareness and advance learning about climate justice and agro-ecology. The building will be renovated to be an example of eco-centric living: making use of water harvesting, renewable energy, insulation, a bio gas digester, waste recycling and sustainable architectural design and building materials. There will also be fruit orchards and agro-ecology gardens around the building.

The Sanctuary building will provide students with an ideal space to raise awareness and advance learning about climate justice and agroecology

The food sovereignty centre will also provide an alternative space of dignity, which will be controlled by students through a communal kitchen. The students will revive indigenous knowledge about food, local recipes and slow food, establishing a cultural space used for talks, workshops and research on local food cultures. The food for the communal kitchen will come from the agro-ecology gardens on campus and small-scale farmers in the City and there will also be a communal eating space.

An additional building will be constructed to serve as a link with the broader challenge of advancing food sovereignty in society. The building will house the research facilities and agendas for the community-based seed bank network, which includes research on

indigenous knowledge systems. The building will also include a training space for agro-ecology. Here the South African science and economics of agro-ecology will be developed. Over the next year the communal kitchen will be piloted, more food gardens will be established, and we aim to open the food Sovereignty Research Centre within the next three years.

II. NATIONAL CAMPAIGNING

2.1 The way forward for the SAFSC: A message from the board chairperson of the Co-operative and Policy Alternative Centre (COPAC)

Dear Comrades,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Board Chairperson of the Cooperative and Policy Alternative Centre (COPAC) to express our appreciation of the solidarity, comradeship and privilege of working with all of you to place Food Sovereignty on the national agenda in the country over the past three years of activism.

I am also using this opportunity to communicate that, as discussed at our last NCC meeting, we are no longer the permanent secretariat of the SAFSC. However, we will continue being a committed alliance partner and will facilitate national coordination engagements in different ways, when we can, through our food sovereignty activities. We will facilitate in an ad hoc basis.

As we have made clear over the years, COPAC has never monopolised this role and we have always been open to others stepping up to play a secretariat role.

Last week Thursday was an important culmination of our national activism for 2017. We rocked government in Tshwane! Our visits to 6 government Ministries/departments to present the Peoples Food Sovereignty Act gained attention in the Daily Maverick, 702, SAFM, Algoa Radio. As usual, television did not respond to our press release but we created our news through social media. Government was also generally responsive.

Since 2014 and the Right to Food Conference, SAFSC has grown in strength, in rootedness and identity. We have brought together forces from the agrarian, climate justice, food justice, solidarity economy and community spaces since the Food Sovereignty Assembly at the beginning of 2015. We walked on two legs: attacking the existing corporate controlled food system and building food sovereignty platforms/forums from below. Together we achieved the following:

- A public presence through the Hunger Tribunal (2015), two national Food Sovereignty Festivals (2015 & 2016), a drought speak-out, a national bread march (2016), a

Peoples Parliament (2016) to adopt a Peoples Food Sovereignty Act and several engagements on this Act on different platforms;

- The creation of national food sovereignty platform that is driven through campaigning commitments by each partner organisation. These common commitments now add up to a national campaign program. The program for 2018 will be distributed shortly for others to add to;
- A loose network of alliance partners, driven from below and through radical non-racial and non-sexist solidarity;
- A knowledge commons of tools, experiences (learning exchanges, etc) and practices;
- We have a common social media platform from webpages, online newsletters, Facebook, twitter, etc.
- The development of activist tools around solidarity economy, food sovereignty, worker cooperatives, seed banking and water sovereignty. We have had numerous activist schools to ensure these tools are utilized at the grassroots;
- We have momentum to build local food sovereignty alliances, forums and pathways, some more advanced than others.

In this context I would like to make special mention of the COPAC team that have contributed to SAFSC building. A special thank you to Andrew Bennie and Athish Kirun for their efforts in 2014-2015. Jane Cherry and Nomaswazi Mthombeni (2016) who built on previous efforts. Jane Cherry and numerous student volunteers who have taken this further this year. Jane Cherry as a young woman, organizer and full time employee has been outstanding in her selfless commitment and hard work. We need many more women leaders like her and the others mentioned. The future belongs to this generation.

All these achievements, however, have been secured through us also avoiding the pitfalls of movements that have come before. We have learned from the Landless Peoples Movement, the Anti-Privatisation Forum, the TAC and Environmental Justice Network. Institutionalising movements from above and being driven by finance has not worked. We have also engaged with FMF and MACUA and learned about the limits of not building institutional structures. As a loose network and a national platform we have something that has worked so far. We will deepen this together.

We have also experienced numerous challenges. Resources have been a challenge, as have the unevenness of activism on the ground, the lack of reporting on activism and failures to replicate common learning. Larger political dynamics have also impacted on SAFSC such as rampant authoritarian populism, male chauvinism and the general toxicity in our body politic. However, we have survived and worked around and beyond these challenges. In this context COPAC reserves its right to work with those who are committed to genuine unity, building from below, respectful of democratic processes, supporting the contributions each partner is making, radical non-racialism and non-sexism.

We are not at the end of the road! Coming out of the recent NCC we have opened up an exciting discussion about a new phase of SAFSC building. See the discussion document in

this newsletter. We also had great inputs on food garden mapping in Johannesburg, roof top aquaponics farming in the inner city of Johannesburg and Food Sovereignty in Detroit involving about 1 500 gardens. These inputs will be made available as part of continuing reflection, debate and stimulating activism. We are calling for moving beyond symbolic activism and a shift to build food sovereignty pathways in communities, villages, towns and cities. We must end hunger in these spaces through pavement gardens, food sovereignty commoning, water sovereignty and more! We must build local alliances and forums to ensure we can endure the next drought and a world driven by climate shocks. We must build local leadership, capacity and transformative activism!

COPAC will be working with Inala at Wits to end hunger and then move into the inner city with Greenhouse Project and others. Moreover, we will be hosting activist schools on water sovereignty, a process to secure a Peoples Water Charter, taking the Peoples Food Sovereignty Act to parliament, keeping our social media platform going and more. As mentioned, others in the campaign also have important campaigning contributions to make for 2018 to build from below. The campaigning priorities document for 2018 will be released soon for further input.

Let's deepen genuine solidarity and build food sovereignty pathways from below. We have a loose network, a national platform and grassroots activism, with momentum.

Let's root SAFSC where we live and work! It's a collective project! It's a 21st century movement in the making! Let's support each other through collective solidarity and inspiring initiatives!

Your feedback on this communication is welcome.

Thank you comrades
Solidarity and Amandla!
Vish

2.2 Discussion Document: Coordinating the SAFSC to Advance Food Sovereignty in Villages, Towns and Cities

1. Introduction

During the past three years of SAFSC's existence it has undertaken a number of mobilisations and activities at a national level. These include the drought speak out and bread march, the hunger tribunal and the launch of our food sovereignty act at a people's parliament, to name a few. COPAC has played a secretariat role of SAFSC during these years. In its commitment as secretariat, COPAC has convened the national coordinating committee meetings (3-4 per year), hosted two food sovereignty festivals, and hosted various activist schools on worker cooperatives, food sovereignty, seed banking and people's power

and alliance building. These national events have inspired activism and made our demand for food sovereignty heard at a national level, however, beyond this, and at a local level, our reach and impact has been uneven.

At the end of 2017 COPAC will be stepping down as Secretariat to the SAFSC, and in this context it is important to discuss the way forward for coordinating the SAFSC from below. In order to map a pathway for SAFSC in the coming years, and in the absence of COPAC as its secretariat, it is necessary for us to take stock of our past successes and challenges at national and local levels, and chart a way forward that ensures we can overcome these challenges. This will include asking hard questions about the reach and influence of SAFSC in our local spaces of influence.

This document serves to assess our achievements and failures at a local level, and in doing so, propose a way by which we can continue to coordinate the campaign through these local spaces. For it is in our everyday practice, through engagements in our communities and our local activism that we can make a lasting impact. It is from this local level that we can begin to feed ourselves, our households, and thereafter villages, towns and cities. It by undertaking these practices at the grassroots, including saving seeds and growing food, that we can demonstrate to ourselves and our communities that food sovereignty can be worth our time and effort.

2. Pathways from below

Food sovereignty pathways from below are constructed as we show that another local food system is possible in our local spheres of influence. The questions we need to ask ourselves as actors in SAFSC then, include to what extent we have been able to create critical mass to feed villages, towns and cities? Can we say that our methods of production (as farmers) are making an impact and inspiring others to grow food agroecologically. Have we established suitable local food markets and systems in which we are also composting, managing water sustainably, sharing knowledge and establishing seed banks? Have we, as communities or community organisations, promoted cooperatives, or established food commons on communal areas of land? All of these are important pathways to achieving food sovereignty, but how far can we say we have gone to achieve this?

Right now practice in the SAFSC in terms of the above is very uneven. We have many inspiring stories of community food gardens that provide schools with food, of farmers using agroecological methods and activists establishing food sovereignty forums. People are sharing the ideals of food sovereignty in their communities, with children and youth, and we have some impressive testimonies of seed banks being established within organisations in our campaign. There are a number of other inspiring examples of food sovereignty practices that are taking place at a local level, but these examples are not sufficient to build critical mass. In addition, we are not sure of our reach as we have not been mapping food production in our local spaces, and neither have we been building or mapping local food sovereignty alliances. These are the type of questions we need to answer in order to move forward as a grassroots campaign. And importantly, to overcome these challenges we also need to ask

the question ‘what is standing in the way of achieving the above?’, and, ‘what has been the role of leadership from below in inspiring and encouraging these interventions?’ as discussed below.

3. Leadership from below

It is clear that campaign has had a presence nationally but it is very uneven in some local spaces. We have some activist presence, but we haven’t been able to produce enough solid food sovereignty activists who can make sufficient progress and multiply our reach and practice from below. In addition, we have not had sufficient accountability and report backs in terms of campaigning commitments. What this suggests is that leadership from below has been uneven too.

4. Coordination from below

Given the above observations and after stark critical reflections on our local campaigning, we need to ask ourselves how we can continue to coordinate SAFSC as a loose alliance from below? There are different tools and mechanisms which we have access to, which we can utilise as we aim to coordinate the campaign from below. These include:

- i. SAFSC quarterly newsletter – which serves as a platform to share inspiring stories of how we are building the campaign and alternatives in our local spaces.
- ii. The SAFSC webpage – which serves as a cyber-commons to share our knowledge and direct people to for information
- iii. Social media including Facebook, Twitter and the Google list, which serve as useful tools to document our activism and practice and thereby inspire others. Another option we could include here is a SAFSC Whatsapp group.
- iv. Networking and learning exchanges provide important platforms for sharing knowledge and experiences within communities and between communities, especially on forum building and agroecology, but can also include seed banking, water management, etc.
- v. Local festivals – during 2015 and 2016 we were able to host national food sovereignty festivals, but due to lack of funding in 2017, we have not been able to host one. In the absence of the national festival we have realised that there are many other local festivals that have been taking place, including Ntinga Ntaba Ka Ndoda’s festival, ACB’s seed festival and the Soweto Eat In. One way to build SAFSC from below is through local festival such as these.
- vi. Activist schools – many activists in the campaign have attended various activist schools or training events hosted by organisations within SAFSC. At these schools they have been equipped with the skills and resources to host their own schools. We are unsure of the extent to which these have taken place due to lack of reporting and accountability. Going forward, we encourage activists to use the tools that they have been given (both documents and skills) to host similar activist schools or workshops in their communities or forums.
- vii. NCC – COPAC will no longer be the secretariat of SAFSC, however it will be able to play this role on an ad hoc basis as and when it is having an event, it could be the NCC. If anyone other organisation in SAFSC can convene the NCC, they are welcome to be

secretariat for that event. In the absence of physical meetings, the NCC can communicate through teleconferences and on email to consult on issues where necessary. The key role of the NCC is thus to support building food sovereignty from below.

2.3 SAFSC campaigning programme for 2018

SAFSC's strategy for 2018 will be led by organisations in their local spaces. The table below shows our 2018 campaign strategy based on local commitments. If you would like to add your organisation's commitments to this programme, please send them to Jane at janecherrytree@gmail.com

Organisation	What activities will you be engaging in during 2018 to advance food sovereignty in your community?	How will you share your experiences with the rest of the campaign?	How do you plan to overcome any challenges to ensure we build scale?
<i>Botshabelo Food Producer Forum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote a local market by creating a market day - Look for a market in our community through the Free State Corporation - Promoting agroecology workshops by visiting local organisations to assist them with skill development learning - Seed sharing to promote seed sovereignty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Photo sharing - Writing newsletters - Google list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing information to popularise the campaign - Use available spaces to spread the message of food sovereignty - Visit local producers to share their skill
<i>The GreenHouse Project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the advocacy through networks, stakeholder engagements, introducing the concepts of agroecology and sustainable farming through forums and networks - Having a strong media engagement through local media forums - Planning to host a Agroecology, Permafunk and Fermentation Festival in April 2018 in Soweto - Seed collection to start establishing a seed library and bank - Establish a nursery for fruit trees, ornamental plants and herbs - Campaign around the protection of our own African honey bees in cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share our knowledge and experiences through different platforms, community newspaper, social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Networks to build capacity, we need to set up a community enterprise
<i>Sipho</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fight for water rights - Engaging with community to talk about seed saving - Engage with the municipality - Encourage more households to have vegetable gardens by sharing knowledge, experiences and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exchange visits to share knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to a lack of land we need to learn how to practice agroecology in small spaces
<i>Wits Inala Forum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main project for 2018: fully establishing the Food Sovereignty Sanctuary - Grow more produce for the WCCO to give to food insecure students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share activities through Facebook, Instagram and Twitter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobilize more students to participate in SAFSC projects

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assist COPAC in creating the Food Sovereignty Act and Water Act - Motivate students to visit the Greenhouse Project, Soweto Eat Ins etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write articles for the SAFSC newsletter and hopefully the Wits student paper, and try to work with the University's radio station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Align Inala principles with SAFSC values - Use social media more effectively to promote Inala and the SAFSC
<i>Nelson Mandela Bay Forum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formalise our forums in 2018 - Approach small-scale forums in the region to share experiences and to embark on activities of common concern like agroecology, water rights etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing articles and using social media - Intensify our communication in sharing experiences with the community - Start a Facebook and Twitter Page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major challenge as a forum is funding. This makes it difficult to even hold meetings. - We will register a cooperative with the hope that we will be able to finance the work of the forum
<i>Abanebhongo – Persons with Disabilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuing with the campaign: Work on a campaign strategy and on agroecological gardening to show the community that disabled people are able to do things for themselves - We currently have 6 gardens, and it also includes disabled children - 1 September: first event of the Easter Cape Disabled Association with the help of the Department of Health. T-Shirts were sewn and sold in the office - When the rain came: the Children's Movement planted seeds and the goal is to give the disabled back their agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be active on social media (Twitter, Facebook), newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The drought became real, the taps were dry, the dams had no water. Municipality had to take the water from one dam to the other → Community wanted to be involved in the activities of the municipality and demanded to see the plans - Challenges will always be there, we must not give up!
<i>Children's Resource Centre and the Children's Movement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue establishing and consolidating the Gardening Programme - Initiate a Fruit Tree Planting Campaign - Coordinate with partners in the area/ also on local, regional, provincial level - Strengthen our Children's Movement Cooperative - Getting the children to become involved in the Environment Program - Distribute and introduce the People's Food Sovereignty Act to the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share activities and experiences through articles in newsletter - Through social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do education and training on SAFSC work and strengthen the work with local partners - Link our sections nationally to our SAFSC partners - Consolidation and strengthening of our internal gardening programme is central to our SAFSC work.
<i>West Coast Food Sovereignty and Solidarity Forum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build a strong Food Sovereignty Forum in the West Coast by establishing activist schools, agroecology learning sites and by building an agroecology market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular planning meetings
<i>COPAC</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>National level:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Activist school for handing over Act o Activist school on how to use water guide o National conference on water o National assembly on water charter o Take the FS Act to parliament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Document processes thoroughly, especially as we establish the COPAC garden and seed bank and Wits food sovereignty centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with those who already have knowledge, solutions and ideas. - Continue to share our knowledge with Students at Wits, in communities, and through Democratic

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o SAFSC social media platforms, including newsletter, webpage, Facebook o Democratic Marxism Seminars (7) - <u>Local level:</u> o COPAC indigenous agroecology garden and seed bank o Food Sovereignty Centre at Wits – with agroecology demonstration site, seed bank network, and communal kitchen to feed Wits. o Work on plan to feed inner city Johannesburg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share resources on email, social media and webpages - Active social media strategy at each event. 	Marxism workshops, and other workshops.
<i>Emfuleni Agriforum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We intend to host land access campaigns every quarter with marches to relevant institutions to mobilise access to land for emerging farmers. - We also need to host skills development enhancement for agro-ecology starting by February 2018 which includes physical training of permaculture by June 2018. - We intend to host dialogue meetings that will include all stakeholders in the communities. - To set up seed banks in the region and host workshops in three areas of the region to provide trainings to members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will host community meetings, utilising media in our campaigns and other sources of publications like newsletter and social media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We intend to engage community members in every action taken by the forum. - To provide proper understanding of the campaign in the area. - Make sure that the campaign benefits everyone, especially the emerging farmers that affiliate to the forum.

2.4 SAFSC Visits Six National Government Departments with the Food Sovereignty Act

Jane Cherry

On Thursday, 12 October, the SAFSC National Coordinating Committee (NCC) visited six national government departments in Pretoria to hand over our People's Food Sovereignty Act and receive responses.

The day commenced with a briefing session on the bus ride from Johannesburg, where the NCC discussed the strategy and purpose of the engagements. The purpose of the meetings was to engage with departments on the Act, request a response from them and a commitment to engage us in the coming year around our demands. One of our key strategies was to make a noise in the streets as well as on social media about our presence and our purpose.



The six departments had all been notified by email that a small delegation would be coming (at least three emails were sent to each department). Although only two departments had acknowledged receipt of the emails, we still set off to pay a visit to all of them.

The first stop was the department of Water and Sanitation. While we had to remain in the foyer, five NCC members engaged with seven of the Department's officials and discussed the Act, while the rest walked the streets, handing out flyers and telling by-passers why we were there and what the act was about, and of course, tweeting. Department officials committed to send us a written response to the act.



Similar engagements took place at the following departments. While some departments led us in to their lofty boardrooms and commended us for our actions and acknowledged receipt of the act, promising to take it to higher levels, others listened to our inputs as SAFSC members shared their struggles and the need for a people's Food Sovereignty Act. It was an important platform for us to share and make our demands known to actors in national departments of our government.

The six departments we set off to visit included:

Department of Water and Sanitation; the Department of Social Development; the Department of Health; the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; the Department of Human Settlements and the Department of Environmental Affairs.

Not all departments were welcoming, however. The Department of Health denied receiving our emails and did not let us enter their premises to engage, while there was no one at the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to receive us when we went to their premises at 3:30.

Where to from here? Our plan for Food Sovereignty Act engagements next year involves the following three steps:



1. We will follow up with the national departments to obtain their responses to the act and ensure ongoing the dialogues with them.
2. We will take our Act to parliament in Cape Town.
3. While national level engagements are important, equally important are engagements at a local level. It is for this reason that we encourage SAFSC members to approach your organisations, your communities and local government with the act. By taking the act into local spaces of engagement, it will be used as a tool to educate our communities about food sovereignty, but also to advocate for a more food sovereign system in local government spaces. This is an important step to achieving food sovereignty in our villages, towns and cities.

III. INTERNATIONAL NEWS

3.1 Urban farming in Zurich, Switzerland: Quartierhof Wynegg

Sunanda Mathis



Strolling through the lush, green gardens of the Quartierhof Wynegg, it is hard to imagine you are in the middle of the city of Zurich, in district 8 to be exact. Built in 1931, the farm has evolved into a bustling community hub with more than 300 active members from its surrounding area.

The Wynegg, as we call it, harbours chickens, rabbits, woolly pigs, horses, mules, sheep, bees and is home to a variety of fruit trees, vegetable gardens and a vineyard. The farm – along with all its non-human members – is organised into 12 autonomous working-groups: The “pig group” for example, takes care of the woolly pigs, the members of the “apple-juice group” make delicious juice and schnapps out of the freshly-picked apples and the “garden group” grows a plethora of organic vegetables.

The farm is founded on a spirit of cooperation. The governing board, for example, comprises 10 representatives – one from each working-group. Rather than interfere with the activities of the groups, the board focuses on allocating funding or managing public relations.



The highlight for all at the Quartierhof Wynegg is the annual harvest festival, which happens at the end of October and is open to the public. All members collaborate to organise the event and each working-group contributes something particular to their group: The horse group offers horse-rides for kids, while garden group members sell parts of their harvest and the members of the apple-juice group demonstrate fresh apple-juice production with a traditional cider press. One part of the money raised by the festival goes directly into the farm's account, which is managed by the board, the rest goes into the respective working-group's account.

Since 2015, we have also cultivated a communal vegetable garden. On 350 square metres, we plant a large variety of vegetables, herbs and berries using agro-ecological farming techniques. We started educating ourselves on what it means to have an organic, agro-ecological garden and found that crop rotation, succession planting and intercropping are three important elements for a successful and sustainable garden.

We started planting potatoes: they are an excellent ameliorant to the soil, making it crumbly and providing the perfect conditions for the next crop. We also incorporated a “bee’s paradise” into the garden – a crop of colourful flowers to attract wild bees and support a healthy ecosystem.



We save as many seeds as we can for the next season. An example of this is Nüsslisalat, an indigenous lettuce variety. Once it withers, we cut it off, let it dry and shake out the seeds. When the time comes, the seeds serve as catch crops for kale, onions or leeks. To salvage the seeds of tomatoes, cucumbers and courgettes, we simply put aside a few of the vegetables at harvest, pick out the seeds and let them dry. That way, we successfully established a small seed bank for future gardening seasons.

We are able to produce a vast amount of food, ranging from juicy tomatoes to large heads of cauliflower and fat, healthy pumpkins. A significant portion of these vegetables are consumed by the gardeners themselves and the rest is sold in our little “farm shop”. This year, we were able to sell produce worth 3000 Francs, which is equivalent to about R43 000 (Swiss prices: 1kg of potatoes is sold for R65).

The Quartierhof Wynegg is a refuge in the city-centre, where people of all ages come to relax and admire the abundance of plants and life. Thanks to the communal vegetable garden, we are able to produce local, organic food for the neighbourhood and take a confident step towards being a food-sovereign community.

3.2 Keep Growing Detroit

Sunanda Mathis

Detroit is the largest city in Michigan and has faced multiple economic challenges over the last decades, resulting in demographic decline and urban decay. When its automobile industry closed down, thousands of citizens were forced to leave the city due to unemployment. What followed was, among other things, abandoned houses and vacant land, which significantly destabilised the remaining communities.

Keep Growing Detroit (KGD) aims to ameliorate these conditions through urban agriculture, cultivating the vacant land in collaboration with local communities to make fresh, organic produce available to them. KGD is a gardening, economic development and educational organisation running various established programmes, such as the Green Garden Resource



Program or Grown in Detroit. The organisation's goal is to "cultivate a food sovereign Detroit where the majority of fruits and vegetables consumed by Detroiters are grown within the city limits". One of the core principles of KGD is to advance healthy relationships to food and encourage local communities to start their own vegetable gardens, providing them with the necessary equipment. Nearly 20 000 residents have chosen to cultivate a farm or garden. In cooperation with the Green Garden Resource Program, which functions as KGD's seed bank, they provide over 1 400 family, school and community gardens with organic seeds and vegetable transplants.

Another central concern of the organisation is to change the value of food. Because most Detroiters don't have access to fresh and affordable produce, KGD operates the Grown in Detroit Program, which is made up of more than 70 local growers who sell their locally grown produce at farmers markets and outlets throughout the city. The annual gross income of 75 000 dollars demonstrates the potential of urban agriculture.

Keep Growing Detroit recognises that in order to feed its 700 000 residents, they need more production-focused farms. To achieve that, urban farmers need education, skills and training in intensive food production methods. KGD has successfully implemented the Detroit Urban Garden Education Series, which is hosted in schools, churches and community centres across the city. Classes provide content on, for instance, basic gardening, water catchment, farm planning, cooking and season extension. Not only that: KGD also operates the Plum Street Market Garden, where sustainable farming practices are demonstrated and growers are given advanced training and technical assistance ranging from land assessment to business development.

Finally, KGD sees the powerful interconnections between gardeners and community-based organisations, and how their work is ultimately strong enough to localise the food system. Fostering these connections is therefore a big part of KGD's work. During shared workdays, community meetings, tours and social events they make sure to encourage all participants to cultivate relationships to build a network of alliances.

"This farm [Plum Street Market Garden] to Detroiters is like a breath of fresh air, a really nice place to come and relax", says one member of the KGD community. For Keep Growing Detroit, cultivating urban farms on the vacant lands across the city is a necessary action to overcome the unemployment and discontent that prevails among communities in Detroit.

Article source: <http://detroitagriculture.net/about/>

IV. SAFSC IN THE MEDIA AND ENGAGEMENTS

4.1 Media

26 September This article on the Daily Maverick by Health e News covers the food sovereignty Act and the call to ban junk food advertising. Vishwas Satgar and Andrew Bennie are interviewed in the article. Access the article at this link: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-09-26-health-e-news-ban-junk-food-adverts/#.WcpxxsqjE2w>

27 September Vishwas Satgar is interviewed on the Eusebius Mckaizer show on Radio 702 about the people's food sovereignty act and the call to ban junk food advertising. Listen to the interview here: <https://omny.fm/shows/mid-morning-show-702/should-we-ban-junk-food>

12 October Itumeleng Mogatusi is interviewed on 702 about the engagements with government departments in Pretoria on the Food Sovereignty Act

13 October Vishwas Satgar is interviewed on Algoa FM about the engagements with government departments in Pretoria on the Food Sovereignty Act.

13 October In this article, Jane Cherry is interviewed about the engagement with government departments on the food sovereignty act. Access the article here

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-10-13-the-right-to-food-government-asked-to-hear-cries-of-a-hungry-country/>

13 November Ferrial Adam is interviewed on radio 786 about the activist guide on water sovereignty.

4.1 Engagements

9 September Tedx Talk: Rushka Johnson presents at a Tedx Talk in Port Elizabeth entitled *A Seed in Time*. In her presentation she speaks about the importance of seeds and nurturing them; fighting against GMOs and pesticides, and the current seed laws that are in the process of being passed in South Africa. The onus is on us to cultivate the change we need in our communities. The talk can be viewed at this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9F43wwaAfE&list=PL6JJ_NHIJSKWG1YMX_I33zYMq4YmLJede

21 September Vishwas Satgar presents on food sovereignty and the climate crisis and introduces the food sovereignty act at the Human Settlements convention in Johannesburg. Vishwas also hands over the Act to the head of Parliament's portfolio committee on Human Settlements.

26 September Vishwas Satgar is invited to present at the SPII Decent Standard of Living conference. He spoke about water and hunger issues from a food sovereignty perspective.

7 October SAFSC is invited to the Soweto Eat in, Vishwas Satgar presents on the climate crisis and food sovereignty.

6 December SAFSC and ACB are invited to the SAHRC panel discussion on the role of GMOs in combatting food insecurity.

8-9 December ACB hosts seed festival, SAFSC activists attend and discuss seed banking, the role of community seed banks and how to promote an alternative seed sovereign system that recognises the role of farmers in maintaining seed, biodiversity and promoting food sovereignty.

V. ACTIVIST RESOURCES

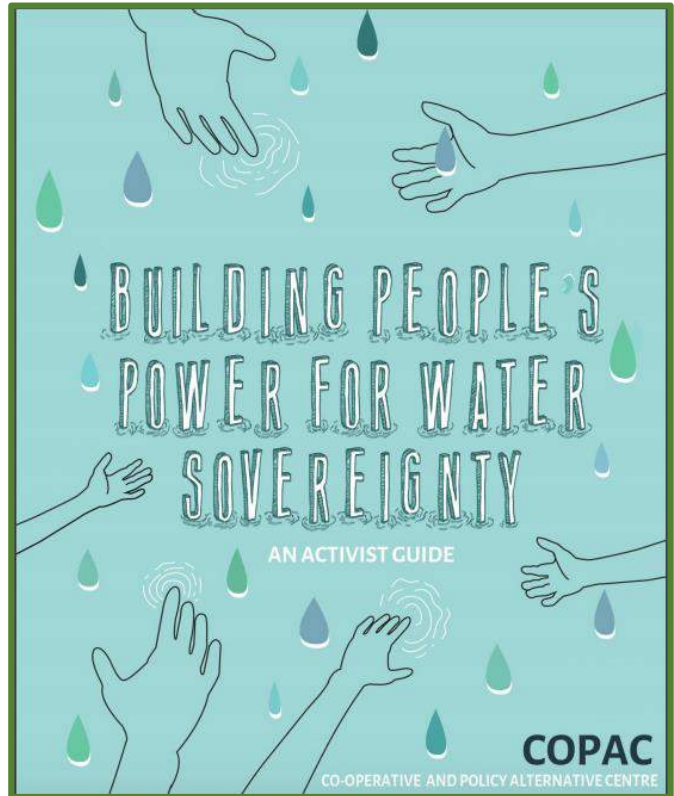
5.1 Activist guide: Building People's Power for Water Sovereignty

The Co-operative and Policy Alternative Centre (COPAC), an alliance partner of the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign (SAFSC), has developed a citizen's activist tool to democratise water resources in South Africa. We understand that the drought facing the city of Cape Town is the result of corporate induced climate change and carbon criminal states, like South Africa, which are addicted to fossil fuels.

This is going to be our new normal and the ruling classes expect poorer communities to carry the cost of this climate shock. We are already witnessing water stress in various poor communities in South Africa on a daily basis.

We note the following:

- South Africa is a water stressed country, almost 98% of our water is already allocated, which means that we only have 2% available for emergencies or future allocations;
- Industrial agriculture uses 62% of the country's water;
- 54% of South Africans do not have access to clean water through a tap in their home;
- Of the 223 river ecosystem types, 60% are threatened with 25% of these critically endangered due to pollution;
- There are 5 000 private dams on farms and this water isn't being shared with affected communities in different parts of the country;
- It is estimated that 37% of South Africa's clean, potable water is being lost and wasted through poor infrastructure such as leaking pipes;
- Gauteng is experiencing ongoing acid mine drainage within the West and East Rand of Johannesburg as well as serious pollution of the Hartbeespoort Dam and the Vaal river barrage through sewerage and multiple other pollutants.



We need to ensure peoples power prevails over water resources. In this regard, we have designed a water sovereignty activist tool available on our website: www.safsc.org.za

Let's work together to claim our rights, advance people's science, agroecology and water sovereignty. Use our water sovereignty tool to learn more about these people's solutions and engage your community. Let's take this conversation to a national process in 2018 to put together a People's Water Charter for South Africa to advance water sovereignty.

5.2 The 3rd Volume in the Democratic Marxism Series: The Climate Crisis: South African and Global Democratic Eco-Socialist Alternatives.

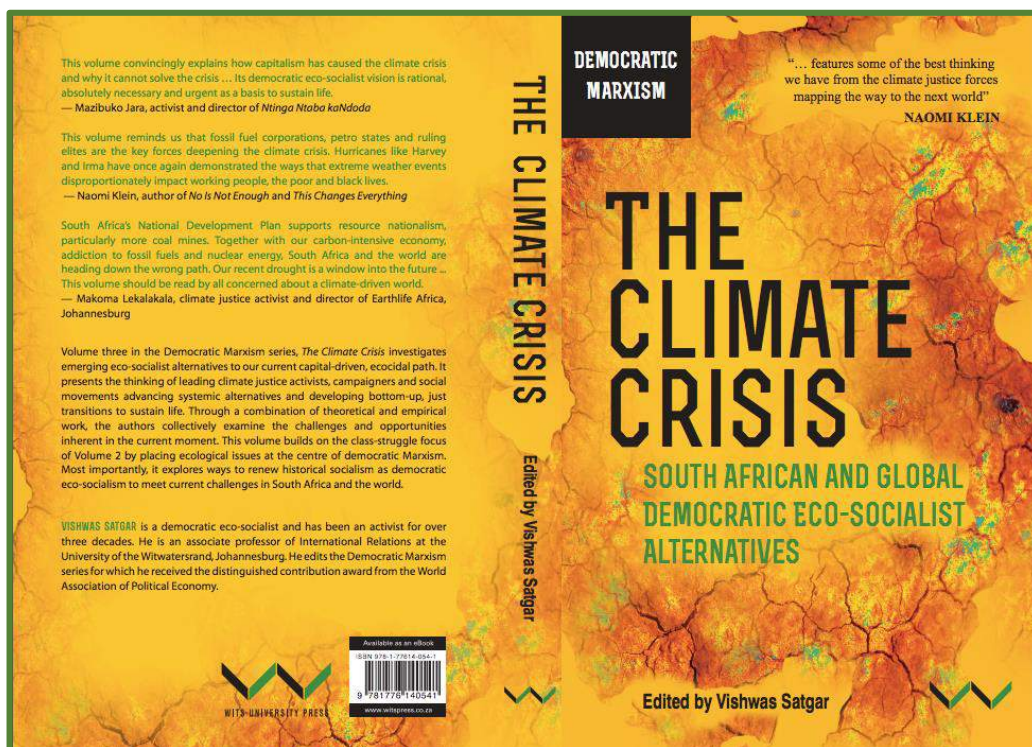
South Africa was hit by several climate catastrophes in the last year. The Western Cape is experiencing the most devastating drought in history and has been declared a disaster area

in May. The agricultural sector has been affected most and increasing unemployment is just one of the many socio-economic consequences.

Durban has been seriously flooded in October as a result of a “super-cell thunderstorm”, leaving behind death and destruction. Homes were flooded, buildings crashed, trees blocked the roads and cars were swept off the streets. Johannesburg too has been hit by a storm in early October, causing floods and fires. Rooftops collapsed or were blown off, cars overturned and a massive fire left entire areas without power.

Climate change is real and it's getting worse. All of the above can be expected to become normality if we don't seek alternatives immediately. The 3rd volume in the Democratic Marxism series focuses on the climate crisis and investigates emerging eco-socialist alternatives to

our current capital-driven, ecocidal path. It presents the thinking of leading climate justice activists, campaigners and social movements advancing systemic alternatives from below and developing bottom-up, just transitions to sustain life. This volume explores ways to renew historical socialism as democratic eco-socialism to meet current challenges in South Africa and the world.



5.3 Celebrating 200 years of Karl Marx

Democratic Marxism Seminars Programme for 2018: Wits University

The Sociology and International Relations departments of Wits University are organising a series of theory seminars and public lectures during 2018, under the rubric of Democratic Marxism: Celebrating 200 years of Karl Marx. The intention is to critically engage with various aspects of the Marxist intellectual tradition, in relation to contemporary issues and debates

that have emerged in South Africa, and globally. As the programme below indicates, leading Marxist scholars and activists will facilitate discussions around their work.

All are welcome to attend. For more information, email: janecherrytree@gmail.com

1. Theory Seminars and Public Lecture: Reading Capital in the 21st Century

Speakers: Alfredo Saad Filho

Dates: 14 – 16 February

2. Theory Seminar and Book Launch: Democratic Marxism Vol. 3: The Climate Crisis – South African and Global Democratic Eco-Socialist Alternatives

Speaker: Jacklyn Cock, Patrick Bond, Vishwas Satgar, Devan Pillay, Michelle Williams and Andrew Bennie

Date: 15 March

3. Theory Seminars and Public Lecture: Climate Change, Transnational Class Analysis and Fossil Fuel Capitalism

Speakers: William Carroll and JP Sapin

Date: 10-12 April

4. Theory Seminar and Panel Discussion: Karl Marx and South African Marxism - Is it over? What future for the Left?

Speakers: Vishwas Satgar, Phindile Kunene, Ronnie Kasrils, Mandla Nkomfe and Devan Pillay

Date: 27 July

5. Theory Seminars and Public Lecture: Fanon and Indigenous Resistance against Capitalism.

Speakers: Glen Coulthard

Date: 27-29 August

6. Theory Seminar: Marxist theories of the State: Old and New

Speakers: Michelle Williams, Devan Pillay, Dinga Sikwebu, David Masondo and Vishwas Satgar

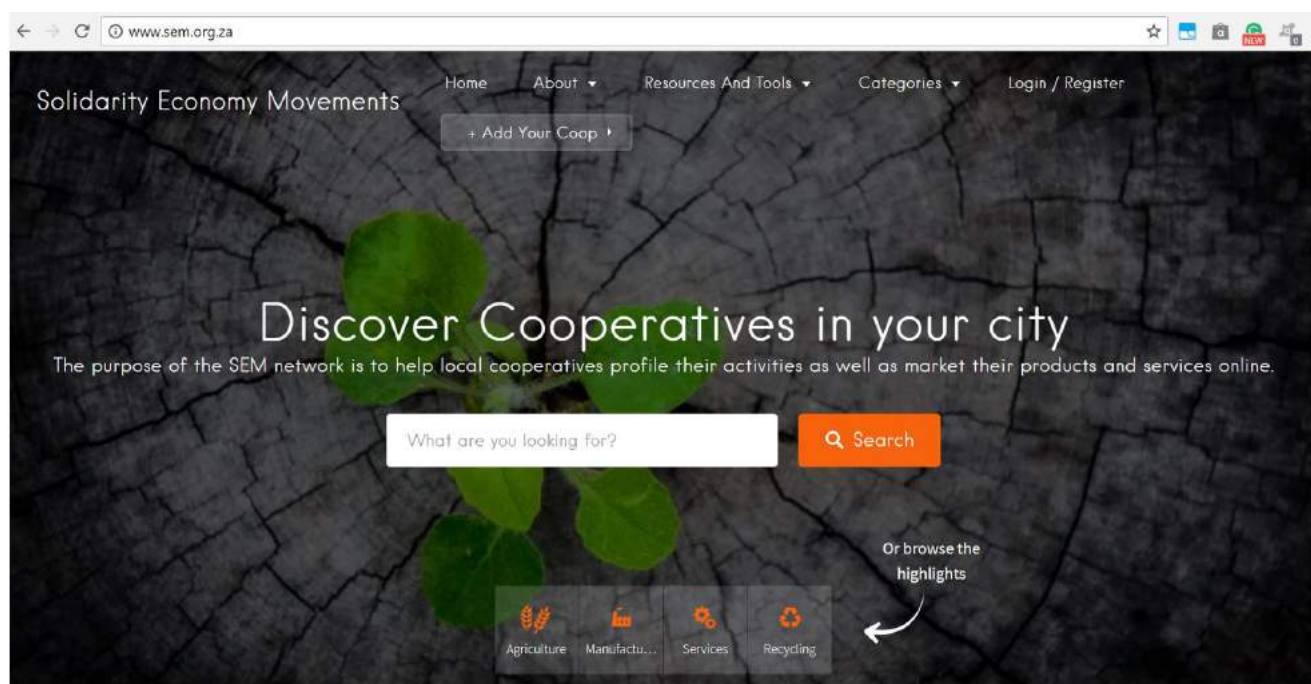
Date: 19 September

7. Theory Seminar and Book Launch: Democratic Marxism Vol.4: Racisms After Apartheid: Challenges to Marxism and Anti-racism

Speakers: Vishwas Satgar, Ran Greenstein, Peter Hudson, Khwezi Mabasa and Sharon Ekambaram

Date: 3 October

5.4 Call to Co-operatives: Solidarity Economy Movements Website Launch



The Co-operative and Policy Alternative Centre has launched a Solidarity Economy Movements website that will serve as a marketing platform for co-operatives in South Africa. The website is a useful tool for anyone as they can register and create a profile of their cooperative. It will serve as a platform for cooperatives to profile their activities and market their products and services online at no charge. Over time, the website could have the potential of being an interactive media platform where coops can post some of their projects and initiatives. The aim of this website is to promote the Solidarity Economy by providing citizens who want to support cooperatives with a portal that allows them to search for cooperatives near them.

We invite all cooperatives to register on the website by following these simple steps:

1. Type the following address into your internet browser: www.sem.org.za
2. Click on the block in the top right corner '+ add your coop'
3. Fill out all your coop details and select 'preview' and then 'submit' your listing
4. Once you submit your listing an account is created and you will receive an email asking you to select a password. You will use this password to make changes to your coop profile at any time by simply logging on to the site.

Share this link with co-operatives you know so that we can strengthen this platform for building the solidarity economy in South Africa.

More information:

www.safsc.org.za

info@safsc.org.za

