



SOUTH AFRICAN FOOD SOVEREIGNTY CAMPAIGN

Seeds of hope; transforming our food system.

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I. EDITORIAL

We must change our food system

Charles Simane

This is our final newsletter for the year 2021. It has been a challenging year where we have been adjusting to the new normal or the 'permanent abnormalcy' of living with the coronavirus. We do not know when the last wave of coronavirus infections will be but, what we do know, is that vaccines are our most important tool. It is our hope that as we enter the festive season, we will all be extra cautious, for ourselves and our loved ones. What is not new in these uncertain times is the fact that food prices continue to skyrocket. According to [Stats SA](#), *"Annual food and non-alcoholic beverages (NAB) inflation was 6,1% in October 2021, lower than the rates recorded in September (6,6%) and August (6,9%). On a monthly basis, food and (NAB) prices increased by 0,9%. This is the biggest monthly rise since April this year but lower than the recent peak recorded in October 2020 (1,4%)."* This steep rise in food prices is worsening South Africa's hunger crisis.

The fact is, most people simply cannot afford to buy food. The [Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice and Dignity Group](#) say that *"the average Household Food Basket increased by R98,08 (2,3%) month-on-month, and R400,83 (10,2%) yea on-year. In October 2021, the average Household Food Basket costs R4 317,56."* A year on year food basket increase of over R400 shows that the government's social grants have dismally not kept up with inflation. The child support grant still stands at R460 while the social relief of distress grant is a mere R350. All of these are shallow solutions, what South Africa needs is a universal basic income grant. The South African Food Sovereignty Campaign and allies have done tremendous work on a UBIG and have released a package of documents, prepared by leading heterodox economists and political economists regarding the importance of a universal basic income grant; [UBIG Now Policy Approach And Proposals Document](#), [UBIG Now Approach And Scenarios Document](#).

This country needs transformative solutions, not mere patchwork. We need to transform our food system with urgency because we do not have much time. In a decade, we are likely to see a 3° temperature overshoot in Southern Africa as other parts of the world reach 1.5°. Leading climate scientists have prepared a [scenario document](#) that outlines how destructive this will be for our food system. Our current water-intensive, chemically addicted monoculture agriculture needs to change. It is unsustainable considering the state of our agricultural land; 70% of it is degraded, only 3% of it has high yield potential and with high levels of evapotranspiration and unpredictable rain patterns, the future of rainfed agriculture is bleak. This is why we need to manifest the vision of the Climate Justice Charter by building a people-centred, earth-based regenerative agriculture. We have no other choice.

II. NATIONAL NEWS

2.1 A Just and Equitable South Africa: Universal Basic Income Grant

Awande Buthelezi

South Africa's post-1994 democracy inherited substantial amounts of income and wealth inequality generated during its apartheid and colonial past. The Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown period has increased impacts of unemployment, low growth, and income and wealth inequality that our country has struggled with since before the pandemic. Under democracy, the state's goal has been to grow and deracialise the South African economy. There has been less focus on wealth redistribution and so inequalities have deepened further since the democratic transition.

This means that a great number of South Africans (mainly black) are denied a life of dignity. The economy has failed to create quality jobs on a large enough scale to meet the demand, and the government has not been able to develop a growth-based economy. High unemployment and poverty indicate that there is a crisis of wage work that goes back to decades of slow economic growth, market-oriented changes to macroeconomic policy, national development strategies, and labour market reforms.

In addition, the labour market is highly segmented - due to the difficulty for workers to transition from one sector to another - and the unemployment rate has not fallen below 20% since the late 1970s. In September 2020, the unemployment rate in the narrow definition (those looking for work) sat at 30.8% according to Statistics SA. The 2011 New Growth Path had aimed to bring unemployment down to 15% by the end of 2020.

A Universal Basic Income Grant (UBIG) or Basic Income Grant (BIG) can assist in addressing these issues.

Progressive Approach to UBIG

There are a number of different positions on the UBIG and the forms it can take. These debates can be proactive or a distraction from the crucial questions introduced by the idea of UBIG. These are questions around whether society's wellbeing is a by-product of economic growth, with wage work the primary means of attaining citizen's inclusion in the economy. UBIG also raises questions on the role and duty of the state to its citizens.

Broadly speaking, UBIG would take the form of a regular and guaranteed income that is paid unconditionally to all people living in the country. A progressive UBIG - one which aims to positively transform our society - would occur together with other social provisions such as free healthcare, free education, public transport and housing subsidies. It would also form part of a broader transformation to social and economic policies aimed at reducing poverty and inequality, while increasing human potential and wellbeing.

The by-products of a progressive UBIG are important. It would not be implemented to achieve an isolated technocratic fix or a solution put into place by an elite group of technical experts. Rather it is part of a larger strategy which aims to transform South Africa into a more just and equitable society.

Essentially UBIG is a democratic systemic reform that is owned and championed by society. These reforms are a move away from market regulations as they recognise the needs of all people and not only what business wants.

Possible Impacts of UBIG

A common concern around UBIG is that a basic income will discourage people from taking part in the labour market, and this would negatively impact on economic activity. There is little evidence that this is true. This claim is particularly misplaced in a society such as South Africa where unemployment rates are very high, particularly for low-skilled workers.

UBIG critics argue that a low basic income would subsidise employers who pay low wages and so impact on minimum wage demands made by workers. At the same time, they argue, it will weaken worker organisation and increase the power of employers in the labour market.

In fact in South African UBIG could have the reverse effect. It could cushion low-skilled workers where the threat of decreasing wages is used by employers as a stick to discourage them from demanding increases. A UBIG, even at a low amount, would allow workers to reject low-paying work, and increase the pressure on employers to raise the lowest wage that workers will take to perform a task. A person's ability to not sell their labour at the going rate would bolster their bargaining power, including as a member of a labour collective such as a trade union.

If employers respond to these shifts in worker power with automation and layoffs, then the social argument for a UBIG only increases. UBIG's ability to transform the society lies in providing people with an income cushion that allows them to put time and energy into tasks outside of wage work. People could engage in such things as care work, and other socially beneficial projects such as community food gardens or studying and learning new skills. We need to support these activities to build a more just and equitable society.

UBIG in this way can challenge the centrality of wage work in our society and help bring about a shift in power relations and institutional hierarchies. A UBIG alone would not result in social justice but it would be a strong step towards its achievement.

Policy varies on where to start UBIG, but a change in the social welfare infrastructure is crucial especially in the context of the suffering experienced during Covid-19.

Action groups such as the Climate Justice Charter Movement through the #UBIGNOW campaign have done much to foster support for the UBIG. Other organisations such as the Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII), Black Sash, and the #PayTheGrants campaign have also done good work in reforming the social security infrastructure and promoting the need for UBIG.

SPII's analytical paper titled, "The Budget, Social Security and the Basic Income Grant Alternative Synopsis" discusses the concept of a decent standard of living provided by a UBIG through a R7 500 monthly grant. This would mean the end of poverty, dependence on wage work, human well-being and a decent life. This is something to work towards and is central to a transformative approach. The Black Sash, in particular, has led a focused campaign for basic income support for all citizens aged 18-59.

Whatever level the UBIG is set at during Covid-19, this can over time be improved. It can build on existing Covid relief measures.

Financing a UBIG

The primary source of financing for UBIG will be through taxation. Some of the funding may need to come from borrowing as the current recession has led to a notable drop in tax revenue, in addition to increased debt levels.

There is also the possibility for the government's monetary policy to assist by lowering the cost of borrowing, and ensuring on-going access to capital for the state. Government can also access funds from other state or quasi-state funds. An example of this is the surplus funds in the UIF (Unemployment Insurance Fund) which could be used as a bridging measure. These avenues of funding are healthier options than the government going into further debt to finance UBIG.

Possible forms of taxation to fund UBIG are increasing taxes on luxury goods, the carbon tax, a tax on financial transactions, and a land-value tax.

Another promising source of funding would be to take a portion of the profits earned by big business into a social wealth fund that could pay out dividends to everyone in the country. For example an IPO (Initial Public Offering) is a possibility. An IPO is a process by which a private company sells shares to the general public. The company offers its shares with the help of investment banks. After IPO, the company trades its shares in an open market. Through legislation government could take a percentage of shares from IPOs and channel them towards a 'Commons Capital Depository'. The dividends from this depository could act as funding for a UBIG.

IPO funding is an example of how a UBIG system could show how wealth in South Africa can be created collectively. Research into the implementation of UBIG shows that the primary challenge for the state is not affordability but rather one of political will.

Conclusion

The potential of a #UBIGNOW relies on synchronisation with other socio-economic strategies, on the social forces - pro-UBIG groups in our society - driving these interventions, and the ability to strengthen and deepen such interventions. Its implementation requires an active state which listens to political and social movements and the societal consent they are strengthening. The deepening of interventions relies on how UBIG is framed. The work done

by campaigns such as #UBIGNOW have helped to achieve a clear framing and building consensus towards a UBIG.

Perhaps the biggest obstacles to overcome is the long-standing belief in wage work, the way income is distributed throughout society, the concept of citizenship, and the role of the state. UBIG should not be considered as a 'silver bullet' to end inequality. Rather we should see it as standing together with the struggles of grassroots forces and social movements. To separate UBIG from its social roots, would end its transformative potential.

We are currently in an unprecedented time in our country's history. The moment calls for an approach that goes beyond a return to the normal. There is no 'normal' to return to in the South African context. There are challenges and unknown factors regarding UBIG's implementation, but these can be overcome with political will and decisive leadership.

This article draws particularly on Hein Marais' discussion paper "How a universal basic income can help South Africa achieve a just transition" and The Institute for Economic Justice's "Introducing a Universal Basic Income Guarantee for South Africa Towards income security for all".

2.2 Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan

Charles Simane

In his State of the Nation Address in February 2019, President Cyril Ramaphosa identified seven key areas which he said are crucial for the development of an inclusive economy in South Africa. He then directed his ministers to develop master plans that are in line with vision 2030 and the National Development Plan (NDP) to realize inclusive development in those key areas. Agriculture and agro-processing are part of those seven key areas hence, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development embarked on developing the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan for South Africa. In March last year (2020), minister Thoko Didiza tasked the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) to lead the drafting, research and coordination of the master plan.

NAMC was established in 1996 through the Marketing of Agricultural Products Act (No. 47 of 1996). Its mission is: to increase market access for all market participants, to promote the efficiency of the marketing of agricultural products, to optimise export earnings from agricultural products; and, to enhance the viability of the agricultural sector. NAMC is a statutory body that is focused on the marketing of agricultural products and export competitiveness. It is telling that the minister appointed a corporate centred body to lead the development of the agriculture master plan. It shows that the department is still erroneously focused on corporate industrial agriculture, further entrenching the power of corporate control

over our food systems. This is blatantly obvious in the Master Plan's visions statement which says: *Globally competitive agricultural and agro-processing sectors driving market-oriented and inclusive production to develop rural economies, ensure food security, and create employment and entrepreneurial*"

This vision indicates an Agriculture master plan whose focus is misplaced. Our agriculture exports reach over 10 billion Rands (\$10.2 billion in 2020) yet people are starving. What we need is a socially transformative agriculture system, as the Charter says, we need to feed ourselves through food sovereignty, not market dependence which only perpetuates hunger and poverty. Market-oriented agriculture cannot be inclusive, it will only perpetuate the existing inequalities that drive divisions in our country. The CJC envisions culturally appropriate and nutritious food produced through the principles of regenerative agriculture, living soil, and agroecological farming. Fortunately, small scale farmers across the country are making the visions of the CJC a lived reality through different agroecological hubs.

In our pursuit as SAFSC and our allies, we are building a democratic and people centred food system that reclaims our food commons. Through food sovereignty hubs in rural areas, peri urban areas, town, cities and universities, we are demonstrating the potential of a people owned food system. We are breaking away from the capitalistic dispossession of our food commons and the finacialization of rural agriculture towards a climate crisis conscious food system that actually feeds the poor. We are currently working on a food sovereignty hub tool with case studies written by different farmers all over the country, sharing their lived experiences, challenges and success in making food sovereignty a lived reality. The time for sloganeering food sovereignty is over, the time for action is now.

III. LOCAL CAMPAIGNING NEWS: BUILDING FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN COMMUNITIES, VILLAGES, TOWNS AND CITIES

3.1. Stellenbosch University Food Garden: An overview —so far

Matthew Wingfield and Tayla David

On the 23rd of September 2020, a group of students at Stellenbosch University(SU) met to discuss the possibility of developing a food garden project. The aim for this project was three-fold: To grow crops that could aid in the alleviation of student hunger, to use the garden as an educational tool for the *Eco-Maties* student society, and lastly, to possibly incorporate the garden into degree programmes in the Agricultural Science faculty, as a form of practical instruction. As a few of the founding members were Masters students in Sustainable Agriculture and the AgriSciences faculty, many of them already had access to resources that could be used in starting the garden, along with connections to various staff members, such as Dr Ethel Phiri and Rhoda Malgas who would be essential to the longevity and sustainability

of the project. It was through this connection with Dr Phiri that we were able to get access to the growing tunnel in which the project first broke ground.

Figure 1: The growing tunnel (offered by a faculty member) before the project began.



From the initial discussions with various students and staff members in planning the garden, it was clear that one of the main challenges that would be faced in the development of such a project would be sustainability —that is, how such a project would be maintained in the future, as students move through their time at the University in a short number of years. This challenge, it was noted, had been the point of failure for past generations of students attempting to do the same thing. Furthermore, ensuring that there were

enough students regularly being involved in the propagation of seedlings, the weeding of beds and the management of the garden remained a core focus.

Figure 2: The preparation of seeding trays.



We soon purchased some seeds, and in consultation with Dr Phiri, sowed seeds into trays ranging from cabbage and spinach, to millet, amaranth and okra—Dr Phiri's specialisation on indigenous crops was educational and practically useful in understanding how to best cultivate these crops. Along with a few other peers from the Sustainable Agriculture cohort, we were able to keep on-top of the weeding of the beds inside the tunnel in preparation for planting the

seeds. At this point, a member that was connected to the *Eco-Maties* society began advertising this project to the societies' members, leading to a few volunteers helping out with the development of the beds in the tunnel.



Figure 3: A group of student volunteers in the outside garden.

The garden was conceptualised to work in an agroecological and sustainable manner, to ensure that this was a financially viable project, as it was student-funded. Therefore, as noted, we propagated our own seedlings rather than purchasing these. We continuously were in conversation with a range of people within Stellenbosch University networks and externally, in order to leverage any support and

donations we could; these conversations were lucrative at crucial times in the start-up phase of the garden. The organic waste from the garden was also deposited into old re-claimed wooden bins in the hopes of creating a compost.

Figure 4: Seedlings ready to be planted.

Another core challenge that the project faced was identifying who the grown produce could be given to. While after contacting SU management we were shocked to find out that they had estimated that about 30% of the +- 30 000 students were food insecure, there was no working list of exactly who these students were. This is where the value of our growing networks came into vogue again, where we became aware of an NPO named *The Small Things Fund*. This connection gave us



a way of getting in touch with students that were in need, whom we could donate the produce we had grown to. This flourished into an established relationship which became mutually beneficial as the garden became more productive. Since the inception, we have consistently contributed to the feeding of dozens of students for almost a year, as illustrated by Figure 5.



Figure 5: Packaged produce ready to go.

Challenges and Opportunities of COVID-19

.The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a range of challenges for the functioning of educational institutions throughout the world; the SU context is no different. It was clear the information received from SU regarding food insecurity would only be compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving an increasing number of students that could benefit from the gardening project. However, while we had expanded quite quickly in the first few months, there was no way in which we could hope to even begin to account for the exponential growth in need. The COVID-19 pandemic thus also presented stronger justification for the

gardening project, where it was clear that institutional solutions were missing the mark in terms of time of response, along with the actual need that students had.

Reflections and Future Plans

It is clear that student-led food gardens face many challenges which are further compounded by the COVID-19 context in which we are living; ensuring sustainable student support and bureaucratic hurdles are the core among these. It is further made clear by the COVID-19 pandemic that student food insecurity is not being dealt sufficiently on an institutional level, leaving scores of students hungry, with few alternatives. This impresses the importance of such interventions as student-led gardens that grow food, but also serve as educational hubs and as support for communities during these times characterised by isolation on various levels. The SU food garden therefore aims to keep expanding and making connections with younger generations to transfer the knowledge gained in this short period, but also to eventually leave the management of the garden to future generations of SU students that can bring their own creativity into making this project successful.

The garden project has also been leveraged as a tool in which to engage various students and other partners on the Climate Justice Charter (CJC). As food sovereignty and the co-creation of knowledge regarding such systems is foundational to the CJC, we have found it useful to use this as an entry point from which to think through the CJC at SU and its formative role in creating better lives for students while also thinking through the bigger discussions that can come out of such innovative projects.

3.2 The Greenhouse People's Environmental Project

By Itumeleng Mogatusi

The Greenhouse People's Environmental Project Is based in Joubert Park and was established and officially opened in 2002 during WSSD, as an outreach and demonstration centre that promote sustainable development through

- permaculture landscaping & organic food and herb gardening
- materials reclamation for reuse, recycling and composting
- renewable energy & energy efficiency
- rainwater harvesting, grey water treatment & water efficiency, and
- green architecture & design

The GHP facilitates the development and replication of community based environment programmes, and related enterprises to:

- demonstrate 'green' technologies, ideas and practices that will advance sustainable development in the communities,
- support community based organisations that are working to improve sustainable development in urban, peri-urban and rural areas,
- share information that enables individuals across society to improve the quality of life in their communities in ways that advance environmental sustainability,
- inspire people towards self-development and reliance within environmental limits, and
- support networking among individuals and groups involved in community based 'green' entrepreneurship and sustainable living.

The relevance of the GHP's contribution

Despite repeated endeavours to improve the lives of the majority of South Africans, the quality of life in many communities has not improved significantly. At the same time environmental problems including Climate Change and pollution of scarce water and land resources have become an escalating concern.

From repeated engagements with community based groups and individual champions, the GHP found that the major reason for lack of significant shift towards a just transition to sustainable development and adaptation to Climate Change is inadequate support for practical people centred solutions.

The GHP fills this vital gap through partnerships with groups and individual champions who see the need to support and grow the network of community based 'green' enterprises. We support community based groups and individual champions of 'green' enterprises with replicable working demonstrations.

Partnerships

The GHP pursues partnerships at three levels.

- The first level are Friends of the GreenHouse (FROGS). These are South Africans and overseas based individuals who contribute directly to GHP work. Our target in this

category is to reach 15 000 individuals in the next 12 months who will be contributing R10 per person per month towards supporting the GHP work with community based initiatives.

- The second level are private and public sector companies that want to make a difference by supporting community based green enterprise initiatives through the GHP. Our target in this category is to raise R14 million in the next 3 years in direct support of community based enterprise initiatives from South African based companies.
- The third level are community based individuals and groups who champion 'green' enterprises at the neighbourhood level in the communities where they operate. Our target in this category is to reach 730 direct beneficiaries and 1195 indirect beneficiaries of whom 80% will be women, in the next 3 years.

While we have worked hard to sustain relations with key role-players, and continue to survive on contributions in kind from friends and associates, we extend the invitation to other people who want to support community based 'green' enterprise initiatives through the GHP.

Among key strategic partners is the City of Johannesburg. The city continues to be a key strategic partner on account of granting the GHP permission to set up office and run the demonstration, outreach and information centre from the north-west portion of Joubert Park.

Target beneficiaries

The GHP operates at two levels and targets a number of different community based groups and individuals through its work:

At the local level, the GHP relates environment issues to priority community challenges in the CoJ and surrounding areas through individual and group champions.

At the secondary level, the GHP targets civil society formations that share the same aspirations for a just and equitable society to lobby and advocate support for environmental sustainability.

Project outputs to date

There are a number of 'green' design and resource use demonstrations that have been incorporated in the Environment Centre. The main highlights include:

- The Potting Shed, which has been recycled into the current office space of the GHP. The office demonstrates reuse of various building materials, grey water treatment, rainwater harvesting, composting toilets and, passive solar lighting and ventilation. The office remains a draw card for a number of visitors to the GHP.
- Organic gardens, which remain the focal point for community outreach projects for individuals and groups that are eager to grow their own food and herbs. The gardens have inspired the formation of the CBO Hub and collaborations with 10 community based Organic Fresh Produce initiatives. One of these initiatives has become an associate Cooperative of the GHP providing training and gardening services including rooftop gardening. Gardens at the GHPEC continue to serve as the training facility for organic gardening and supply of organic vegetables, herbs and medicinal plants.

- The community centred learning programme, which had grown from 23 beneficiaries to 700 in the Vaal/Sedibeng regions alone. The programme was growing steadily in Soweto albeit with challenges. The National Development Agency (NDA) funded it for R750 000 to the end of August 2011.
- The Recycling Centre, which currently supports emerging partnerships with local reclaimers of recyclable materials. The centre was funded by the former Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism's Poverty Alleviation Programme to the value of R1.5 million.

A CBO hub was established in order for Community Based Organization involved in organic gardens to network and also do peer learning amongst themselves whilst coming together to form neighbourhood markets which would foray them into understanding food sovereignty and nutrition, and maybe they might establish themselves as cooperatives in food production. It has been a challenge, for those who succeeded that has been a joy from the labour of love and also interaction with their community, and some had been involved with the Wits fresh produce market.

People were able to have something to eat as well as some cash to buy what they were unable to produce but also to learn about seed saving and the nature of seed required to produce healthy food whilst encountering the laws governing seeds, why it is important for us to save seeds through harvesting before we turn them into food.

The challenge has been understanding the amount of work required and the yield produced affected by so many other things i.e. soil nature, water, infrastructure and land.

Whilst helped members to interact with their communities and engage them in their work, it also became an educable moment for them to be informed on facts about food production and Climate Change effect on that process and to do advocacy work on the mitigation of Climate Change whilst keeping in mind adaptation options

Project outputs to date:

The Potting Shed – this has been recycled into the current office of the GHP and also serves as the meeting space for participants in the GHP supported Hub for Community based Organisations (the CBO Hub).

- **Organic Gardens** – these remain the focal point for demonstration, outreach information to individuals, groups, business and government programmes that want to champion community based organic food and herb enterprises.
- **The Community Centred Learning Programme** – this is a creative learning process that uses Storytelling, Open Space, Appreciative Enquiry and Café Conversations to complement practical hands-on-learning by doing.
- **The Recycling Centre** – this currently supports emerging partnerships with local reclaimers of recyclable materials as service providers to businesses and residents.

Food gardens were developed around Gauteng in Partnership with the NDA in which community based gardens were done within the communities some with nurseries as pilot demonstration project including local recycling, what came out was two champions, one in Mapetla and the other in the Vaal, and for us, that was success out of twelve projects, those people manage to continue even when the stipend had stopped coming

As this work needs

Learn to partner with locals in your developmental work to ease the burden of not being there all the time in order for them to take ownership of the project and also take care of it without supervision from you. patience is virtuous when dealing with communities.

Mind set change is paramount to achieve our goals through our set objectives

Demonstrations work is better than campaigns in communities, some of the participants need to see what you are talking about, and find resonance with it through their lived experience and aspiration that is how they become champions

IV. SOLIDARITY ECONOMY NEWS

4.1 Internationalisation from the perspective of worker cooperatives

International Organization of Industrial and Service Cooperatives (CICOPA)



CICOPA Webinar (From the CICOPA website)

On November 4th, CICOPA organised a webinar on the topic of “Internationalisation from the perspective of worker cooperatives”. The event saw the participation of over 40 participants from all around the world... the event investigated how worker cooperatives build their networks and grow their business across borders based on the case studies of two worker cooperatives coming from different sectors and backgrounds. [Read more](#)

V. SOLIDARITY WITH STRUGGLES

5.1. ***Abahlali baseMjondolo: Food sovereignty from the perspective of the urban poor***

Presentation by S'bu Zikode to the United Nations Food Systems Summit

May I express my appreciation to the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and all organizers of this important discussion. I greet the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Mr Michael Fakhri, and all fellow speakers and participants.

Current statistics show that almost two million people in South Africa suffer 'perpetual hunger', many more suffer periods without food. Around the world vast numbers of people go hungry.

It is morally wrong and unjust for people to starve in the most productive economy in human history. There are more than enough resources to feed, house and educate every human being. There are enough resources to abolish poverty. But these resources are not used to meet people's needs, instead they are used to control poor countries, communities and families.

In South Africa what shack dwellers continue to be told is that the hunger and the substandard living conditions in which we struggle to survive, or that force migrants to move, are a result of our own poor choices in life. In reality the problem is that there are no jobs for most of the poor and those few who are employed are exploited and under-paid. Those of us who are self-employed in the streets of our cities to earn an honest living are attacked and have our food confiscated by the metro police. Those of us who occupy vacant and unused urban lands to build homes close to opportunities for livelihoods are evicted and even killed with impunity. It is a very serious problem that when land occupations are criminalized the right to the city is limited to those who have money.

Millions of families in South Africa rely on state grants but they are not enough for a viable and dignified life. Many families go to bed without a meal. We know that keeping the communities hungry and poor is enjoyed by some politicians who use this tragedy as a controlling mechanism.

We also know that when people receive their grants they mostly go straight to the supermarkets to buy food. The supermarkets suck money out of poor communities and make the rich even richer. It was recently reported that the largest shareholder in Shoprite will receive a payment of R342 million. This is completely immoral, especially in a country with mass unemployment, mass impoverishment and mass starvation.

Almost 50% of South Africa's population is unemployed with over 70% of youth being unemployed. Hunger and starvation are an order of day. In July this year South Africa saw the biggest food riot that we have ever seen in the history of this country, and one of the biggest in the world. The food riots were used as cover by corrupt politicians but the fact is that most of the people who participated in the riots were not supporters of Jacob Zuma and

were looking for food. More than 350 people were killed during the riots. After the riots the police and the army went door to door in poor communities seizing food at gunpoint. They killed at least one person, Zamekile Shangase, a person who had held an elected position of leadership in one of our branches.

The food riots sent a clear message to the government and corporates that as long as people live in poverty there can never be peace and stability. Today the UN and corporations should draw an important lesson on the recent development in South Africa. Without justice there will be no peace.

The Covid-19 pandemic made this situation even worse with national lock downs restrictions. During the hard lockdown people who were already poor and living precarious lives were forced to stay at home with no income. This created anxiety and frustration in some families. Gender-based violence and other social ills such as rape increased during national lock down. It was very difficult for people to adhere to important health measures. How do you keep social distance when you are forced to live in a highly congested environment? How do you constantly wash your hands when you live in a shack settlement that has been left without water?

As a result of abandonment by the state Abahlali have had to occupy vacant and unused land to build homes for our families, to start cooperatives for community gardens, to run mini cooperative shops, share childcare and create political schools, and places for poetry, music and dance.

It has been through these kinds of experiences that we have demonstrated that self-organized and democratically managed forms of food sovereignty can eradicate hunger, and even poverty, if the state will allow it. It would be even better if the state will support it.

We have achieved land reform from below, built community halls and creches for our children without the support of the state. However, we have had to organize and resist to remain on these pieces of land that are often not large enough to also produce food for our families. Lives of sons and daughters of our movement have been taken, women and men have been killed. The recent killing of Zamekile by the police in Lamontville in Durban is another painful experience of poor people being killed with impunity. Her children are orphans today with nobody to raise them with a mother's love.

We have done incredible things on our own against severe repression from the state. However, our lives would be much better if the state gave us the space to organize ourselves freely or even supported us to organize and build our collective power. To deal with the question of hunger we need urban land, support to farm that land in the form of seeds, irrigation, tools, organic fertilizer and so on. We also need a system of markets where poor people can sell food to each other and keep their money moving among the poor.

We face two forces that oppress us. One is the corrupt politicians that always want to control us to make money from our poverty. But we are also oppressed by corporate power manifesting itself in different forms during brutal evictions of communities and no accountability. Some state organs are being used by corporates who then hide behind the

police to displace communities from the land. The way that corrupt politicians and corporates have captured the state has created poverty and misery. This has been well articulated in evidence presented at the State Capture Commission known as the Zondo Commission in South Africa.

We can only overcome food crises when the social value of land is put before its commercial value. Land must be decommodified and the poor supported to build cooperative urban gardens and farms, and to sell to each other through a system of local markets. The food system needs to be taken back from the supermarkets. This will also have the benefit of making healthy forms of food available to the majority. As an immediate measure in the crisis the huge profits being made by the supermarkets can be very heavily taxed to help to pay for all this. But the supermarkets that remain after building a system of grassroots food sovereignty need to be handed over to their workers and managed democratically, buying most of their food from small scale community gardening and farming projects.

It is important to understand that there cannot be a capitalist solution to the crisis of hunger and that there cannot be a solution to the crisis without building the democratic power of the oppressed from below.

Our movement makes the following demands:

1. There must be a rapid release of land for housing and community farming and an end to evictions.
2. Urban farming cooperatives must be supported with seeds, fertilizer, tools and land.
3. A system of local markets must be established and supported so that poor people can sell to each other.
4. The informal economy needs to be supported and the confiscation of goods for making an honest living must no longer be criminalized.
5. There needs to be serious and massive program of job creation.
6. Government must provide a viable basic income grant for the unemployed until they find a decent job and exit the system.
7. There must be provision of a reasonable COVID-19 relief grant for people in distress during this time.
8. The governance of our cities must be democratized and people supported to build democratic forms of popular power from below.

5.2 We are Cabbage Bandits!

After public outcry, the state will not prosecute the cabbage bandit Djo Bankuna, his case is *nolle prosequi*!



Djo BaNkuna. Taken from Independe and Online News (IOL)

Bankuna wrote on his Facebook,

“On 17/11/2021, I received a letter from the Acting Director for Municipal Courts Prosecution notifying me about the withdrawal of the case. This was after I submitted my representations on 28/09/2021. Therein are argued that there was no case against me. That I did not break any municipal bylaws by planting cabbage and onions rather than grass and roses. I argued that the municipal amenities bylaw that was cited on my R1500 fine was desperate and irrelevant as there was no such a public amenity at the corner of my property. My house is not a public amenity. I decried the blatant abuse of power by the TMPD, specifically commander Elvis Ndlovu. The prosecutors agree. No case.

[Read more](#) about Bankuna’s story.

VI. INTERNATIONAL NEWS

6.1 Salute to India's Farmers! Global Social Movements issue solidarity as protest completes year

Cross posted from La Via Campesina

In a big win for India's protesting farmers who were leading a historic agitation for nearly a year, the Government of India – on the 19th of November – announced the repeal of three controversial farm laws that threatened to corporatize the country's agricultural sector. It is an inspirational account of what peoples' power can achieve even in the most adverse conditions.

The Indian farmers' protest, one of the largest mobilizations in recent history, completes a year on 26th November 2021. In the course of this historic protest, peasants and workers have braved harsh winters, heavy rains, brutal crackdowns and a wave of campaigns that tried to criminalize, imprison, defame and delegitimize the protestors and their supporters. [Read more](#)

6.2 Stories of Agroecology and the Climate Crisis In Africa

Cross-posted from Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa

[Kampala, Uganda, November 3, 2021] AFSA is happy to announce the publication of a new book, **"STORIES OF AGROECOLOGY AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS: REPORTS OF GRASSROOTS INNOVATIONS BY JOURNALISTS FROM 14 AFRICAN COUNTRIES."**

The book brings together grassroots stories of good practices on agroecology and its overall benefits in attaining food security and a climate-resilient future in Africa, presenting agroecology as a viable way to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Through agroecology and food sovereignty perspectives, AFSA teamed with pan-African journalists from 14 African countries to depict the struggle, difficulties, hopes, and dreams of climate change adaptation in Africa.

They documented fascinating narratives about the enormous benefits of agroecology in protecting agricultural biodiversity, diversifying rural and urban livelihood options, and ensuring food security in the face of alarming biodiversity, climate, and hunger crises in Africa.

[Read more](#)

Download the [book Here](#)

VII. CLIMATE JUSTICE NEWS

7.1 Launch of the climate Justice deal Podcast

The Climate Justice (CJ) Deal podcast is a new podcast that will look into some of the research, policy and activist work influencing and inspiring the formulation of the CJ Deal.

The CJ Deal is a set of policies that translate the principles and systemic alternatives described in the Climate Justice Charter into policy form. In this podcast, we interview academics, researchers and activists on ideas and articles that have influenced the creation of the CJ Deal for South Africa.

Please [Click here](#) to listen and share. Please also like, subscribe and leave a review to help allow more listeners to find this podcast.

The Podcasts are also available on the [CJCM Webpage](#).

The CJ Deal Podcast is hosted by Awande Buthelezi

Organiser and Researcher

Co-operative and Policy Alternative Centre (COPAC)

7.2 Wits Council resolves to appoint Pro-Vice-Chancellor for climate sustainability and inequality

Mark Heywood writing for the Daily Maverick

At a meeting of the Wits University Senate on 4 November 2021, the Vice-Chancellor (VC), Professor Zeblon Vilakazi, proposed the novel appointment of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Pro-VC) for Climate Sustainability and Inequality to lead the university in a multifaceted and multidisciplinary approach to addressing the challenge of climate sustainability and justice. The proposal was overwhelmingly supported. [Read more](#).

VIII. PRESS RELEASES AND SAFSC IN THE MEDIA

8.1 List of SAFSC's Latest Media Engagements

15 July 2021- Vishwas Satgar on Newzroom Afrika- food and the July violence
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzKrkwyQpNI>

16 July 2021- Awande Buthelezi and Vishwas Satgar, Daily Maverick article; South Africa is turning on itself. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2021-07-16-south-africa-is-turning-on-itself/>

30 July 2021- Charles Simane Interviewed for the Daily Maverick, climate Pledges.
<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-07-30-when-words-come-too-easy-climate-change-pledges-must-be-honoured/>

10 August 2021- Vishwas Satgar on Newzroom Afrika, Climate change-code red for humanity. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psc2yjOhTc>

04 September 2021- Vishwas Satgar on the Big debate_Who are the Real Looters in South Africa?
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=the+big+debate+who+are+the+real+looters

17 September 2021 – Awande Buthelezi-Telephonic interview with radio Good News 93.6, The National Food Crisis Forum.

14 October 2021- Vishwas Satgar on Newzroom Afrika, Climate Crisis and Renewable energy. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6mGPJUgIW0>

19 October 2021- Vishwas Satgar, Awande Buthelezi, Charles Simane and Ferrial Adam, Daily Maverick op ed, political party manifestos for LGE.
<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-10-19-crisis-what-crisis-three-major-parties-in-election-in-denial-over-the-climate-crisis/>

19 October 2021 -Charles Simane- Telephonic interview with Valley FM News [critique of party manifestos]

20 October 2021 – Charles Simane- Telephonic interview with Radio 786 [Critique of party manifestos]

28 October 2021- Charles Simane Interviewed for the Daily Maverick, critique of party manifestos. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-10-28-any-climate-friendly-parties-out-there-worthy-of-your-vote/>

29 October 2021- Awande Buthelezi- interviewed for the Daily Maverick, critique of political party manifestos for the LGE. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-10-29-starved-for-choice-party-manifestos-lean-on-ways-to-tackle-food-insecurity/>

5 November 2021- Ferrial Adam- Interviewed on Radio 786, CJCM Alternative to COP 26

7 November 2021- Vishwas Satgar- Interview on Radio 786, CJCM Alternative to COP 26

8 November 2021- Vishwas Satgar on Newzroom Afrika, COP 26
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPCPtV3xO80>

8 November 2021- Awande Buthelezi- Interview on Cape Argus

9 November 2021- Vishwas Satgar on Newzroom Afrika, CJCM Parliament action

8.2 List of SAFSC's Latest Press Releases

23 July 2021: The ANC's Nation-building Project has failed nation-building project:
https://www.safsc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Press-Release_NFCF_23-July2021.pdf

17 September 2021: The Lessons from July; Let's feed ourselves through Food Sovereignty:
<https://www.safsc.org.za/press-statement-the-lessons-from-july-lets-feed-ourselves-through-food-sovereignty/>

21 September 2021: CJCM Memorandum of Demands to the University of the Witwatersrand. <https://cjcmm.org.za/media/releases/ef4ac52a-8e83-47e1-b489-83eefc90f4ad>

16 October 2021: World Food Day - Climate Justice Charter Movement's Assembly and Launch of Climate Critique on Party Manifestos.
<https://cjcmm.org.za/media/releases/2cfa08e7-7244-47c2-97ec-c7993b519950>

20 October 2021: COPAC: Submission at the SAHRC's Inquiry into access to water in Limpopo. <https://cjcmm.org.za/media/releases/47beea2d-8db1-4255-a1eb-6d3fcb3ad162>

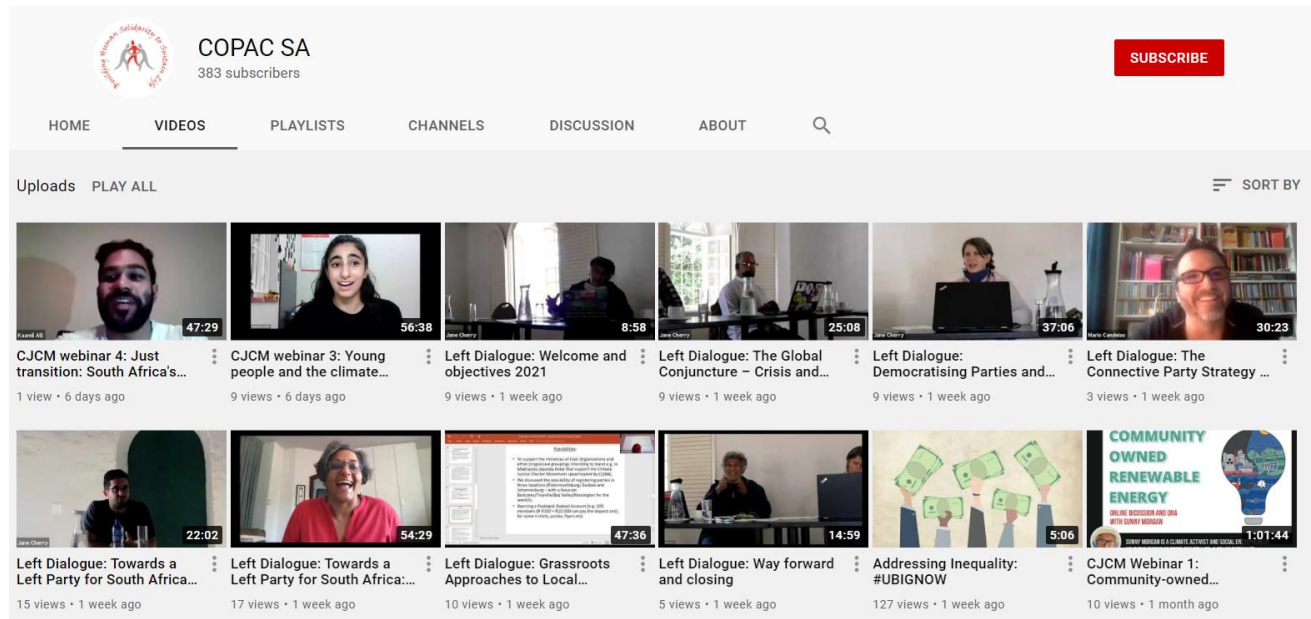
22 October 2021: CJCM Critique of Political Party Manifestos for the local government elections. <https://cjcmm.org.za/media/releases/3bf2493b-f04b-4bc1-9df5-fb4544a8fda0>

9 November 2021: Declaration: South Africa's Parliament and All Political Parties are Carbon Criminals! <https://cjcmm.org.za/media/releases/3193eb20-f562-4e84-af01-b57e5ec5fadd>

IX. ACTIVIST RESOURCES

9.1 Online Webinars

We have had a number of other exciting webinars, events and public talks. All of these have been uploaded to YouTube and can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/c/COPACSA/videos>.



9.2 Activist tools title

We have several activists tools from Mapping tools, to training guides and visual tools and others. All of these are important activists tools!

<https://copac.org.za/training-guides-visual-tools/>

We also have Campaign Resources; grassroots organising, campaign material and training tools.

<https://www.safsc.org.za/grassroots-organising-tools/>