

Groundswell News Journal

A project of the 501(c)(3) Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice
We are a Global Family. News by and about Climate and Social Justice Activists.

Our Motto: Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.

Our Slogan: The way forward: cycle back to basics.

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Indigenous People & Climate Change

By Rituraj Phukan, India
August 9, 2020

There are over 476 million indigenous peoples living in 90 countries across the world, accounting for 6.2 per cent of the global population. The 9th of August is celebrated as the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, marking the first meeting of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in 1982. Among other things, the day also recognizes the achievements and contributions that indigenous people make to improve world issues such as environmental protection.

Indigenous peoples are the holders of unique cultures, traditions, and knowledge systems and have a special relationship with their lands and hold diverse concepts of development based on their own worldviews and priorities. At the same time, Indigenous peoples face numerous challenges, such as little or poor access to sanitation, lack of clean water, inadequate medical services, widespread stigma and discrimination, as well as land grabbing and encroachment on their lands.

Climate change has exacerbated the difficulties already faced by vulnerable indigenous populations in many regions. These communities are often found to be sharing a close relationship with nature and dependent on natural resources but face widespread discrimination, including political and economic marginalization, loss of land and resources, human rights violations, etc. Indigenous peoples around the world are often found at the frontlines of climate change and they are among the first to face the direct impacts of warming and rapid changes in the living environment.

India is home to about 700 tribal groups



which constitute the second largest tribal population in the world after Africa. Many of these communities are forest or fringe forest dwellers, impoverished and dependent on natural resources for sustenance. Loss of forest cover, invasive vegetation, and loss of indigenous food sources have emerged as direct threats to the food security of millions. The impact of climate change on native biodiversity used as food and medicine by indigenous communities is an unknown but expected consequence.

Recent policy decisions by the government of India will exacerbate these challenges. The decision to open and extend coal mining, allowing the private sector into ancient forested areas, and the draft Environment Impact Assessment notification (EIA 2020) will have a profound impact on the wellbeing of indigenous communities. These decisions are being seen as contrary to the commitments made by the country for pursuance of the Sustainable Development Goals and as signatories to several global agreements.

The first ever climate change assess-

ment for India published last month has also presented a grim analysis of observed changes and future projections of warming impacts. Across the Himalayan region, the lives of indigenous communities are threatened by glacial meltdown. In the short term, accelerated melting of glaciers increases the volume of water flow, with floods and erosions downstream. In the long term, water scarcity has been predicted by several studies, as glaciers and snow cover shrink. The short-term and long-term impacts will affect millions of montane and riparian communities across the Himalayan region.

The Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment: Climate Change, Sustainability and People, published last year, stated that even in the best-case scenario, the Himalayan mountains will lose more than one-third of their ice by the end of the century. The projections by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development are worst for the Eastern Himalayan region, with near total loss of glaciers in the same

Indigenous *continued on page 3*

CONTENTS

CLIMATE
EMERGENCY
PAGES 1 - 11

EARTH
REGENERATION
PAGES 12 - 14

ENDING
RACISM
PAGES 15 - 19

CHOOSE
A CHARITY
PAGES 20 - 28

HUMAN
INTEREST
PAGE 29

What is the Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice?

Coalition Founders: John and Iona Conner

Editor/Publisher: Iona Conner

Wire Editor: Allen Hengst

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Web site: www.groundswellnews.org

Board of Directors: Jeannette Bartelt, Bill Boteler, Ekwe Chiwundu Charles, Iona Conner, Jussa Nhari Kudherezera, Mr. Kennedy Kwuelum, Mukesh Nand, Rituraj Phukan

Advisory Board: Dan Adams, Robert Burrowes, Fr. Ted Cassidy, Michael Mann, Mar-iam Nabukeera

Contact: Grassroots Coalition, c/o Iona Conner, 2170 Route 88, Brick, New Jersey 08724; groundswellnews@pa.net

Contributors: Fr. Ted Cassidy, Lillian Kabahuma, Prince Kitumaini Kamundala, Jussa Nhari Kudherezera, Ezekiel Kulaba, Samuel Mirindi, Mariam Shere Munezero, Idris Bilyaminu Ndasadu'Lau, Francine Nzokira, Solomon Oluwaseun, Rituraj Phukan

Our Slogan

**THE WAY FORWARD:
CYCLE BACK TO BASICS.**

Mission of Our Journal

The mission of *Groundswell News* is to be a beautiful, inspiring, uplifting journal which educates and enlightens people about climate change through scientific articles and stories by and about activists who are working to protect life on Earth and preserve natural resources. We are a global family.

What is the Grassroots Coalition?

John and Iona Conner started this non-profit 501(c)(3) organization in 1990. The mission was and remains "dedicated to creating the critical mass of active participants needed to being ecological justice to this Earth by providing information and resources to individuals which encourage and assist them to make lifestyle changes beneficial to the environment and to effectively grapple with local and global environmental concerns."

Who are we trying to attract?

We hope to reach people who are concerned about global warming and realize that they are part of the problem but don't know what to do. We invite them to sign up for our newspaper. Please tell your family and friends about us.

What are we trying to achieve?

We want to rapidly increase the number of serious climate activists in the world and inspire them through stories from other activists. Our goal is to keep their spirits up, their energy strong, their hearts open, and their eyes bright and alive.

Our Values

This journal is based on love for Earth, all people, all forms of life – plus air, clouds, rain, snow, weather, oceans, forests, etc. We love Nature. We respect everyone and are willing to share our experiences, both good and bad, with others who may profit from them.

Guidelines for Submissions

I do not get directly involved in fundraising. To submit a story, you need to write a regular article about your work and submit it in a Word document with 2 or 3 photos, including captions and photo credits and then email it to me at groundswellnews@pa.net. If you need funding, mention that in your last paragraph and be sure to give your contact information.

Please email Iona at groundswellnews@pa.net for the full Guidelines. I'll be eager to see what you submit. Thanks so much.

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Iona's Column:

What a great network we have!



Dearest Amazing Global Family,

We have the most wonderful network of activists in many countries working hard, intelligently, and compassionately on a variety of issues which will surely lead us all to a better, more loving, peaceful, and safer world than the one we inhabit today.

As serious activists, we may become tired and discouraged at times – I do. All we need to do is take a break – I do. Talk with friends, read good books, spend time alone in silence, have some fun – I do. It's important to shore up our energy and boost our emotions in whatever ways give us joy and renewed strength, and then we can face new challenges with hope and courage.

Each one of us has a vital role to play. Our work reverberates throughout our homes, our families, our friends, our communities, and on to the world at large.

I cherish each one of you in our *Groundswell News Journal* network. You know who you are; you know who you can reach out to for support and ideas because the people whose stories are found within these pages will surely help you, as they do me.

Honestly, every time I create a new issue of our newspaper, I am filled with renewed faith that our efforts will one day pay off and maybe some day we can relax.

With Love and Gratitude,

Iona

Indigenous *continued from page 1*

time period. With rising temperatures and precipitation changes, the implications for indigenous communities will be profound and threats from glacial lakes, flash floods, landslides, erosion, and extreme weather events are likely to increase.

The impacts of Eastern Himalayan warming is already manifest in the north-east of India, which is home to numerous indigenous communities. Blessed with natural largesse, the region is vulnerable to natural disasters. In December 2018, Assam and Mizoram were named as the most vulnerable to climate change among 12 Himalayan states at the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24) at Katowice, Poland.

Nowhere are the indigenous people more threatened than in the Amazon with the invasion of indigenous land by miners, loggers, and farmers in Brazil. Across the Amazon, extractive industries implemented without the consent of indigenous people are threatening their livelihoods. Deforestation is a major cause of climate change and it is having a profound impact on the indigenous communities of the Amazon basin.

Indigenous communities in Africa, Australia, and on the small island nations are facing multiple existential threats. Encroachment, water scarcity, food availability, and disease are aggravated by climate change impacts. Rising sea levels may force the abandonment of some Pacific island nations and displace hundreds of thousands. Climate change impacts will likely lead to the worst ever humanitarian crisis, with indigenous communities being the worst affected.

The evidence suggests that the livelihoods and cultural identities of the more than 370 million indigenous peoples of North America, Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific are already under threat. The utilization of traditional knowledge for conservation of the natural ecosystems has emerged as one of the vital

components for resilience development. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples establishes the right of indigenous peoples to the conservation and protection of the environment of their lands and resources.

The implications of climate change on indigenous populations is most pronounced in the Arctic region, which is warming at least three times faster than the rest of the world. In the high Arctic region, indigenous communities have survived the extreme cold for tens of thousands of years, depending on hunting walrus, seals, reindeer, and polar bear. Their economic, social, and cultural existence and identity is associated with hunting, as well as herding reindeer and fishing.

The Sámi, Europe's only recognized indigenous population, inhabit the northern regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia, extending across 388,000 square kilometers (241,092 square miles). The Sámi people have been herding reindeer in the frozen landscapes since the last Ice Age. Reindeer herding is vital to the culture, subsistence, and economy of all the inhabitants of these regions, not just the indigenous communities. It will take all of the Sámi traditions, local knowledge, and methods of land and resource management to adapt to these rapid climatic changes.

The Inuit, who live in northern Canada, Greenland, Alaska, and Chukotka in Russia are hunters and the changing climate and landscape has forced them to alter hunting and harvesting time. They are worried about the loss of sea ice and extinction threat to animals like the polar bears, walrus, seals, and marine birds that rely on sea ice as habitat. The Inuit culture and relationship are uniquely related to the Arctic ecosystem, and what happens to the species directly affects their future.

Other indigenous people of the arctic, namely, the Aleut in the Aleutian Islands, Gwich'in in North America, Nenets, Chukchi, and many others in northern Russia face similar existential challenges. It is expected that the opening up of the High Arctic sea routes and the race to exploit minerals and hydrocarbons of the hitherto inaccessible north will further compromise the survival of the indigenous communities of the region.

Climate change poses a danger to the survival of indigenous communities worldwide, even though indigenous peoples contribute little to greenhouse emissions. However, indigenous peoples are vital to creating a dynamic adaptation and mitigation pathway. Involvement of local communities

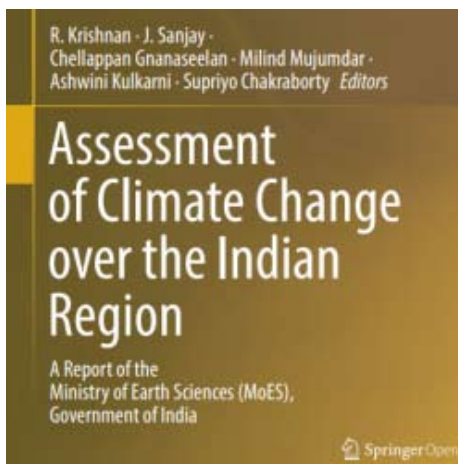


in conserving and restoring the natural ecosystems is important to enhance resilience. It is widely recognized that traditional knowledge and solutions must be harnessed for appropriate localized responses to help cope with these challenges.

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was first pronounced by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1994 to raise awareness and protect the rights of the world's indigenous population. There are many examples of the fact that indigenous people interpret and react to the impacts of climate change in creative ways, drawing on traditional knowledge and other technologies to find solutions which may help society at large to cope with impending changes. Planning for the future should include enhancement and support for the adaptive capacity of indigenous peoples integrated with disaster preparation, land-use planning, environmental conservation, and sustainable development strategies.

Rituraj Phukan is the National Coordinator for Biodiversity, The Climate Reality Project India and COO of Walk For Water. He serves as the National Coordinator of Citizens Climate Lobby India; Secretary General of the Green Guard Nature Organization ; Assam Coordinator of Kids For Tigers, the Sanctuary Tiger Programme; and an Ambassador for the Marine Arctic Peace Sanctuary. Additionally, Rituraj is Associate Editor of Igniting Minds; and was a member of the International Antarctic Expedition 2013 and Climate Force Arctic Expedition 2019. He is also a member of the IUCN Wilderness Specialist Group and Commission Member of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas. Follow current environmental issues on Rituraj's blog C.A.R.E. Climate Awareness Report for Earth.

Source: <https://climateawarenessreport.wordpress.com/2020/08/09/indigenous-people-climate-change/>



Climate Emergency



Photo: FordFoundation.org

“Indigenous peoples are the best stewards of their land and the massive quantities of carbon within them – especially when they gain legal acknowledgment of their land rights,” writes author Steve Rhee.

6.5 Million Hectares (16 Million Acres), 50 Years, 1 Indigenous Community

By Steve Rhee

Ford Foundation: August 5, 2020

When the indigenous community in Sungai Utik turned down an offer to buy its forests in 1973, it didn't expect to be fighting for its land rights nearly 50 years later.

Like many Dayak Iban elders on the island of Borneo, Apai Janggut can't determine his precise age. He knows he has to be over 80, because he was born when the Dutch still colonized Indonesia. But you'd never guess he's that old if you saw the lithe, barefoot ease with which he navigates the dense rainforest his community protects as a sacred gift from its ancestors.

In February, just before Indonesia locked down for Covid-19, I tried (and sometimes failed) to keep up with Apai on a hike through what he calls “the supermarket” – the pristine hardwood forest that has provided almost all of his community's nutritional and medical needs for the past 130 years. He shared why his community, based in the tiny Indonesian hamlet of Sungai Utik, has fought so hard to protect its forests from encroachment and extraction.

With his lean arms and shoulders adorned in Dayak Iban tattoos inspired by forest flora, Apai pointed to dozens of species of great value to Sungai Utik's 300 residents – from a potent anti-malarial called engkerebai to a towering *Dipterocarpus* tree that provides a substrate for bees to “make the best honey you've ever tasted....

Our peoples see the forest as our mother, the river as our father,” Apai explained. “They provide us with our food, medicine, clean water, resins for waterproofing canoes, wood for homes – and we have ancient rules for protecting them. We have everything we need in these sacred groves.”

My visits to Sungai Utik have given me a ground-level understanding of what hard science has now proven at the global level: Indigenous peoples are the best stewards of their land and the massive quantities of carbon within them – especially when they gain legal acknowledgment of their land rights. When indigenous peoples secure this formal recognition, they have the authority to fend off extraction, logging, and other commercial operations that result in forest destruction. In fact, the World Resources Institute reports that deforestation is up to seven times lower inside legally recognized indigenous territories than outside them.

Indigenous and other local communities have legitimate claims to nearly half of the world's land. And yet they have been granted legal rights to less than 20 percent. If indigenous communities and their allies narrow that gap, it will have important implications for all citizens of this warming planet. If we don't, the math suggests there's no way, short of an unprecedented technological breakthrough, that governments can meet the Paris climate targets and keep global warming to under 1.5

degrees Celsius.

Granting indigenous peoples the rights to their land isn't just critical for our planet; it's more cost-effective than attracting billion-dollar investments from green investors like Bill Gates and multilateral institutions. Competing approaches to climate-change mitigation, such as carbon capture at coal plants, cost up to 42 times more. Therefore, investing in land rights is not just the right thing to do for indigenous peoples; it's also a smart, sustainable solution for addressing the greatest environmental threat we all face.

Caterpillars and Chainsaws

Sungai Utik's struggle to protect its forest, which stores some 1.3 million tons of carbon, began in 1973. That's when a Malaysian logging company showed up with a large box once full of instant noodles but packed with rolls of cash. Many other loggers, pulp-and-paper companies, and palm-plantation owners soon came bearing gifts.

To assess these offers, Apai helped lead a slow, careful Dayak Iban deliberation process, enabling all adult members of the community to weigh in on the potential costs and benefits. The community determined that the money would run out quickly, but the damage to the forest would last for generations. “We knew if we lost our forest, we'd lose our culture,” Apai said.

Other areas of Indonesian Borneo,

Rainforest *continued on next page*

Climate Emergency

Rainforest *continued from previous page*

especially those without the close ties and strong leadership of Sungai Utik, signed deals and lost their land. As a result, the rainforest of Borneo, one of the most biodiverse ecosystems in the world, has been decimated. In 1973, more than 75 percent of Borneo was covered in dense forest. Today, only 38 percent of Borneo's forests remain intact. When flying over Borneo, I see ever-bigger bald spots and more hair plugs – the perfectly spaced rows of monoculture palm trees characteristic of industrial plantations.

Mina Setra, a diminutive 42-year-old woman who has become a giant in the world of indigenous advocacy, grew up in one of the communities that lost its land. “A state-owned company turned the whole community, all 12 villages, into a palm-oil plantation,” she said. “Even the branch of the river where I used to canoe is literally gone. All that remains is a plantation producing oil for American and European lipstick, Nutella, and chocolate.”

Setra has dedicated her life to helping communities like Sungai Utik avoid this fate. In 1999, just before she graduated from college, one of her professors recommended she join a new advocacy organization, now known as the Indigenous People's Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN), which has helped 19 million indigenous Indonesians use their voices to



A woman from the Sungai Utik community harvests vegetables from their forest to cook.

speak truth to all levels of power.

In its early days, AMAN, a Ford grantee, had only crumbs for funding, but Setra had found her path. Working for \$15 a month, Setra made AMAN's office her home and slept there on newspapers on the floor, even landing in the hospital twice for malnutrition. “I've always loved this work,” she said. “It has given me purpose in life.”

Malnutrition was not the only risk. When Setra was in a rural community supporting peaceful protests against a palm-oil company in 2003, she got her first death threat. A friend burst into the house where she was staying and screamed, “Men are coming to kill you! You have to leave right away!” Setra went into hiding for two weeks, staying in a different home each night. “But then I got on my motorbike, rode over to the company's office, and stormed in,” she recalled. “I demanded to see the man in charge. I said, ‘I am Mina Setra. He knows me.’ The head of the operation agreed to meet her. “He was so shocked I confronted him.” That company never threatened her again, but others have.

Several of Setra's close friends and colleagues have paid for their activism with their lives. Yanes Balubun, head of AMAN's Maluku Province branch, was murdered for protesting a military logging operation. Jopi Peranginangin, who worked for AMAN, was protesting an oil-palm expansion when he was stabbed from behind. “I was with Jopi right after the stabbing,” Setra said. “I'm still haunted by seeing the blood flowing from his body.”

This Land Is Their Land

Apai traces his community's struggle for legal rights back to 1998, when Indonesia's military dictator Suharto was forced to step down and a democratic era began. Marginalized communities started to make their voices heard, and Sungai Utik began mapping his community's territory.

Sungai Utik's leaders got no help from local, provincial, or national officials in navigating through the bureaucratic maze involving more than 21 government agencies and at least a dozen steps. In fact, they got the opposite: moving targets and roadblocks based on the racist notion that indigenous communities can't manage their own affairs.



Photos: Kynan Tegar

Apai Janggut, a leader from Sungai Utik who was at the helm of the community's fight to reclaim its land, leads a tour through the forest.

It was not until 2013 that Apai and the community gained a fighting chance to secure their right to their land. That's when Setra, then AMAN's director of advocacy, and a team of its lawyers won a landmark victory in Indonesia's highest court, ruling that customary forests belong to indigenous peoples rather than the state. “I was at a friend's wedding when I heard the news,” Setra recalled. “I interrupted the party by jumping up and down like I was crazy.”

Despite the win, the community still needed to negotiate land borders with neighboring communities and press its claim with the district government. Unfortunately, the district leader – the bupati – stonewalled Sungai Utik for years. This came as no surprise to community leaders, who knew that district governments have much stronger incentive to grant land concessions to companies – a source of official revenue and off-the-books graft – than to cede forests to their rightful owners. It took six years of advocacy, led by Sungai Utik native son and one-time district legislator Herkulanus Suto-mo Manna, to get district leaders to merely lay out the details of what they required in the way of maps and evidence.

A key turning point came in June of 2019 when Sungai Utik won the UN's Equator Prize, a prestigious award for innovative climate solutions. The international recognition created much-needed external pressure on the bupati to approve a decree that would allow the Ministry of Forestry to visit the community and verify its claim.

Thanks to that pressure, the delegation finally made the visit to Sungai Utik in February of 2020. They stayed in the longhouse, showed admiration for Sungai

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Climate Emergency

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Sungai Utik is home to nearly 300 people who have been living off the land for 130 years.

Utik's forest stewardship, and asked good questions. "I was optimistic following their visit," Manna said. "But this process has been so long and so difficult, I didn't want to assume anything."

On May 20, 2020, the Ministry of Forestry made it official, signing a hutan adat certificate that gave Sungai Utik permanent ownership of its ancestral land – a victory 22 years in the making. The hutan adat covers all 9,480 hectares (23,426 acres) of the community's forestland and another 607 hectares (1,722 acres) of croplands. It's the largest parcel of land ever granted to an indigenous community in Indonesia.

When Manna received the news from his good friend Kasmita Widodo, who heads BRWA, a Ford-funded nonprofit that helped Sungai Utik map its land and press its claim, tears welled in his eyes. As soon as he was able to travel to Sungai Utik, he brought together the community in Sungai Utik's longhouse to share the news. "Everybody became swept away by emotions when they first heard, especially Apai," he said. "He couldn't hold back the tears."

Millions to Go Before We Sleep

AMAN and its partners are working to replicate this victory across the Indonesian archipelago. The country's president Joko Widodo, known as Jokowi, has committed to transferring rights to 6.5 million

hectares (16 million acres) to indigenous and other local communities by 2024. That would be a significant down payment toward the 40 million hectares (99 million acres) of thriving forest that rightfully belong to Indonesia's local communities. But given the 22-year, byzantine process Sungai Utik faced – and the fact that the Ministry of Forestry has granted rights to only 45,000 hectares (108,726 acres) so far – advocates are deeply skeptical that Indonesia can meet Jokowi's goal.

This is why AMAN, Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (Friends of the Earth Indonesia), and other organizations Ford funds are pushing for national legislation that would supersede the current federal laws and cut the district's red tape, the biggest impediment for Sungai Utik. AMAN is mobilizing its 19 million members to put pressure on national representatives. It has also invested in helping its members win political office to bring more indigenous voices into the rooms where change happens.

As AMAN and its partners push for legislation, they're struggling to cope with an investment-oriented administration of President Jokowi as well as the strong opposition of corporate interests at a time when civic space is shrinking. Some organizations have been forced to take extra precautions; one organization bought a safehouse for staff so they have a place to go in the case of a police raid.

But these advocates are not backing down. And if they're successful in pass-

ing AMAN's recommended legislation, it would be a breakthrough even bigger than AMAN's court victory in 2013. Rukka Sombolinggi, AMAN's secretary general, projects that it would allow indigenous communities to gain rights to at least another 10.5 million hectares (26 million acres) over the next three years.

A Global March

Even if we are only able to make incremental progress here in Indonesia, the momentum at the global level is undeniable. The movement for indigenous land rights is on the march in at least 40 countries across five continents. In less than two decades, hundreds of local communities around the world have won rights to 150 million hectares (371 million acres) – an area three times the size of Spain. If five countries implement legislation they've already passed, this figure would double overnight. There are approximately 513 million hectares (1,268 million acres) of land in community and indigenous forests globally, so another 150 million hectares (371 million acres) would represent a huge win.

IF NOT US THEN WHO?

The Global Alliance of Territorial Communities demonstrate in San Francisco during the 2018 Global Climate Action Summit.

Last year, these efforts got a boost from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the world's most important scientific forum on climate policy.

Rainforests continued on next page



Mina Setra, Deputy to the Secretary General of Ford grantee AMAN, discusses the issues facing the community over lunch at the Sungai Utik longhouse.

Climate Emergency

Rainforest *continued from previous page*

The IPCC embraced the central role of indigenous communities in climate mitigation: “Much of the world’s carbon is stored in the biomass and soil on the territories of customary landowners, including indigenous peoples, making securing of these land tenure regimes vital in land and climate protection.”

But the approach is still severely undercapitalized. Several global organizations are trying to rectify that, including the International Land and Forest Tenure Facility and the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities.

The tenure facility represents the first major funding vehicle designed solely to raise and invest money to help local communities secure their land rights. Its board has strong indigenous representation (including the former secretary general of AMAN), and the facility has landed major investments from the Norwegian government, Swedish government, European Commission, and major private funders like Ford. Since its launch in 2014, it has helped local communities secure more than 6 million hectares (15 million acres) of land. Its leaders believe that it can help Indigenous peoples protect up to 91 million hectares (225 million acres) over the next 10 years.

The alliance is building the connective tissue between, and power among, major grassroots forest guardians, including AMAN, the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests, Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil, and Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin. The alliance has helped these organizations link their causes to larger social movements and generate pressure for change with international bodies such as the UN and World Bank.



Sungai Utik’s victory covers 9,480 hectares (23,426 acres) of the community’s forestland and another 607 hectares (1,500 acres) of croplands. It’s the largest parcel of land ever granted to an indigenous community in Indonesia.



A deck wraps around the various houses of the Sungai Utik longhouse where the entire community lives.

Earth in the Balance

This year’s International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples comes at a pivotal time for the planet. As Covid-19 spreads into remote corners of the world, the pandemic is exacerbating the inequalities already affecting indigenous communities, putting their lives and their land at greater risk. For Sungai Utik and indigenous communities across the globe, the biodiversity of their land is a vital resource for their health, food security, and economic welfare, allowing them to remain resilient in the face of this crisis. Not only are their lives on the line, but the pandemic could undermine progress just as indigenous peoples and their allies are forging a globally significant and recognized path to carbon savings.

However, we can harness several countervailing forces. The recession has dramatically changed the economic calculus for industries such as fossil fuels, shelving projects that would have driven higher carbon emissions and deforestation. The pandemic is also demonstrating Mother Nature’s awesome power to disrupt human societies – a point climate activists have been

making for decades. In fact, polls show that a record number of people is asking how we can build back in a more environmentally sustainable way. Indigenous leaders, environmental activists, and scientists are advancing another key point about the link between forests and pandemics: If we keep turning forests into plantations, that means more opportunity for pathogens to jump from animals to human beings.

Most importantly, the global uprising against systemic racism has brought new attention to the rights of indigenous peoples. These communities now have the platform – and an engaged audience – to make their case that they are far better stewards of the forests than any government.

Across the archipelago, communities are working together to redistribute food from their forests to those who don’t have enough. In doing so, they are also planting seeds that will become new sources of food in the years ahead.

In Sungai Utik, everyone sees the effects of climate change: higher temperatures, more precipitation, greater variation in the growing season. Apai Janggut, who displays Pope Francis’s climate encyclical on his wall, told me that he is hoping indigenous peoples can be a meaningful part of the solution: “We did not create this problem, but we want to help fix it. Just give us the rights we deserve, and we can.”

Source: <https://www.fordfoundation.org/ideas/equals-change-blog/posts/the-fight-for-indonesia-s-forests/>

Climate Emergency



Photo: Thomson Reuters Foundation/Kennedy Kaija

Local women collect clean water from a tank in Kiunga, Lamu, Kenya on July 24, 2020.

Solar Beats Salt, Bringing Clean Water to Coastal Kenyans

By Benson Rioba
Thomson Reuters Foundation: July 31, 2020

An innovative plant makes seawater drinkable in a country where many are forced to rely on potentially unsafe water sources

LAMU, Kenya – Miriam Bahero Musa sat on a yellow 20-liter jerrycan, a smaller white one in her hand, as she lined up with 20 other women to collect water at the Kiunga desalination plant on Kenya's coast. The solar-powered water farm converts salty seawater to clean water for drinking and washing.

"Water is scarce in the area," said Musa, adding that local people are pretty much used to shortages. "We only get a temporary reprieve during rainy seasons," she added.

The plant in Lamu County, near the border with Somalia, about 470 km (292 miles) east of Nairobi, is fitted with solar panels. It pumps water from shallow wells drilled within a few meters of the ocean's high-tide mark into settlement tanks.

The water is then pushed through purifiers that filter out sediment and any foreign bodies, removing odors and cloudiness. From there, the cleaned water is pumped into membranes where a process of reverse osmosis separates the sweet and salt water. During the process, for every 2 liters of fresh water channeled into holding tanks, 6 liters of salt water is redirected back into the ocean.

Chlorine, used for long-term storage and protection against bacteria, is added to the clean water through an automated pump. The treated water, now safe for human consumption, is then sold to Kiunga residents.

The plant operates on energy from its

solar panels, which produce 50 kilowatts of power daily – enough to run two pumps that suck water from the wells on a 24-hour basis.

The plant produces 75,000 liters of clean water a day, serving about 15,000 residents of the remote, semi-arid Kiunga area, who previously suffered health problems from using brackish water.

And even as some businesses were forced to shut under government-imposed restrictions to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus in recent months, the water plant has continued to operate 24/7 as an essential service provider.

Residents still queue up to get clean water for drinking and personal hygiene, including hand-washing, a Covid-19 prevention measure recommended by the state.

"We will keep on washing our hands until this (disease) disappears. I am now

Solar continued on next page

Climate Emergency

Solar continued from previous page



Photo: Thomson Reuters Foundation/Benson Rioba

GivePower's solar-powered desalination plant pictured in Kiunga, Lamu, Kenya on July 24, 2020.

forced to purchase two additional jerrycans of water (daily) to cater for hand-washing in my house, but it is still much cheaper than buying hand sanitizers,” said local resident Sharifa Fumo, who has increased her trips to the plant.

Mohamad Sharif, manager of the Kiunga Community Conservancy, a group set up to protect the area's land and resources, said the plant was very popular. “We have people now travelling long distances to just come and fetch clean water here – even Somali soldiers regularly cross the border ... as anyone can make use of the facility,” he said.

Scarce Supplies

Athman Aboud Athman, a water vendor in Kiunga, said he and colleagues used to sell 20-litre jerrycans for 50 Kenyan shillings (\$0.47) each but had to walk a long way to get the clean water. Now the vendors' profits have increased since the sale price remains unchanged and they can make more trips to the plant in a short space of time, while their customer base has grown thanks to the high-quality water which is easy on soap and fabric.

The desalination plant was constructed by GivePower, a U.S.-based nonprofit that provides solar power systems to communities in developing nations, including schools. Kyle Stephan, GivePower's vice president of operations, said the water

plant was constructed with funding of \$565,000 following a request by Kiunga residents through the conservancy.

Kenya's Chief Administrative Secretary for Water, Andrew Tuimur, said infrastructure projects like the Kiunga solar water farm – which the government was not involved in – were costly but necessary to plug the country's water shortages.

Kenya produces an annual average of 450 liters of water per capita for its population of about 50 million, he noted.

“Anything less than 1,000 liters per person per year is considered water-scarce,” he explained. He called for more public-private partnerships to construct similar water treatment plants in thirsty parts of Kenya.

According to U.N. figures, 41% of Kenyans still rely on unimproved water sources, such as ponds, shallow wells, and rivers, while just 29% have access to safely managed sanitation, with rural areas and urban slums worst hit.

Only nine out of 55 public water service providers in Kenya provide a continuous supply, leaving people to find their own ways of meeting their water and sanitation needs.

Globalwaters.org, a U.S. government website, notes that access to water has failed to keep up with Kenya's growing population, while finance for infrastructure is limited and water unevenly distributed across

the country, beset by droughts and floods.

Local Jobs

Stephan said the Kiunga project was designed to produce clean water for 20 years, in the hope it can continue to operate beyond that or be replaced if running costs get too high. To make the project economically sustainable, GivePower has hired locals to operate the water plant on a day-to-day basis with money from sales used to repair the facility when needed.

The U.S.-based organization recently commissioned a similar plant in Haiti on the freshwater-scarce island of La Gonave, off the coast of the capital Port-au-Prince.

GivePower founder and CEO, Hayes Barnard, said in a statement that availability of clean drinking water would be critical in the impoverished Caribbean nation's efforts to prevent and treat Covid-19, as well as other waterborne diseases it already faces.

GivePower plans to launch other such projects, partnering with governments and communities worldwide, including on new projects in Colombia. It also plans to build another Kenyan desalination plant in Likoni, near Mombasa, by the end of this year.

(\$1 = 107.7000 Kenyan shillings)

Source: <https://news.trust.org/item/20200731121306-xza65/>

Climate Emergency



Photos: Tinashe Muzama

Young people in Zimbabwe take to the streets to educate people in their community about climate change.

Leave No Youth Behind

By Jussa Nhari Kudherezera, Zimbabwe

Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA) celebrates International Youth Month. The 2020 Theme: Youth Engagement for Global Action is very critical especially in the wake of Covid-19 where every institution, business, church, and all gatherings have been suspended.

It's worse for a youth who has just completed a course and looking forward to getting employed. The coronavirus came as a surprise and a slap in the face and hence there is need for youth engagement for global action, especially using the virtual platforms to reach out to progressive global citizens in a twinkling of the eye and help shape the river's course.

Youth in Zimbabwe and elsewhere globally should take advantage of their upper hand in digital space to do serious advocacy around youth issues and how these youths could be sharing their views on the same platform with decision makers globally.

Youth are critical and pivotal in any governance engagements and hence the need to increase more spaces for the youths to explore. Youth engagement recognizes young people's right to participate in decisions that impact them directly or indirectly. Youth civic engagement is also critically important to prepare young people to be active citizens in democracy.

MAYA vowed to Leave No Youth Behind in the Decade of Action and also exhorts that there is ability in disability. The only disability in life is a bad attitude thus inclu-

sion is within everyone's ability. Young people are taking the lead in amplifying their voices, environmental protection, governance issues.

We believe youth engagement and participation starts from home. It is the responsibility of parents/family to inculcate good habits in young people and teach them how to live in harmony with nature, utilize natural resources wisely, and become more responsible for the protection of the environment. Young people constitute a large part of the world's population and young people will have to live longer with the consequences of current environmental decisions. Future generations will also be affected by these decisions. MAYA strongly endorses that Generations to come deserve the healthiest planet we can give them. We need to act now.

Youth are the backbone of the nation. They can change the future of the society if they are capacitated and empowered. Youth are more than passive recipients of external influences, instead they are actively involved in shaping their development by interacting with the people and opportunities made available within their environments.

Engaging young people in environmental sustainability is a promising approach for fostering positive development among youth and communities and, through youth engagement, com-

munities can do a better job of creating the services and opportunities that support young people to develop in a healthier way.

MAYA therefore acknowledges that youth engagement is a central principle of youth development. Young people are agents of their own development.

- #NoisePaEnvironment
- #Decade of Action
- #Tell a friend about MAYA and bring a friend to MAYA

Contact: Jussa Kudherezera

Email: manicayouthassembly@gmail.com

Phone: +263772351138



Climate Emergency

News Briefs

Konrad Steffen, 1952-2020 *excerpt*

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is greatly saddened to learn of the loss of Konrad "Koni" Steffen who passed away aged 68 on 8 August 2020 in an accident in Greenland.

Professor Steffen contributed to the IPCC as a Lead Author on the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate and on the landmark Fifth Assessment Report.

[added] *"Police investigators said he had fallen into a crevasse in the ice and drowned in the deep water below...A fellow scientist at the station, Jason Box, said the crevasse, or large crack, was a known hazard. But he added that high winds and recent snowfall had made visibility poor and landmarks harder to spot..."*

Professor Steffen was Director of the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL) and a former director of the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences at the University of Colorado at Boulder. His passion was the polar regions and he devoted his career to research on climate change and the cryosphere in the Arctic and Antarctic. He was also a remarkable science communicator.

Steffen is highly recognized for his long-term scientific monitoring work of the Greenland ice sheet. Since 1990 every spring he went to the Swiss Camp meteorological base station in Greenland, where he worked with his colleagues collecting data on snow, ice and the atmosphere. "The poles of the Earth are of great importance for the climatic balance of our planet. More research and knowledge of how they work is urgently needed," Steffen wrote on the website of WSL. . . .

A dual U.S. and Swiss citizen, he was married and a father of two. He was a member of the International Glaciological Society, the American Geophysical Union, and the American Meteorological Society. . . .

"In the end," [Ryan R. Neely III] said, "it looks like climate change actually claimed him as a victim."

[added] *Ryan R. Neely III: "In the*

end, it looks like climate change actually claimed him as a victim."

Waleed Abdalati: "He died in a place he loved, doing what he loved. He died at home."

Sources: <https://www.ipcc.ch/2020/08/14/obituary-konrad-steffen/>
[blue] <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/climate/konrad-steffen-dead.html>

Court Overturns U.S. EPA Decision Denying New York and New Jersey Protection from Upwind Air Pollution *excerpt*

Submitted by Doug Davis, New York USA

Washington, D.C. – The Adirondack Council and environmental advocates are very pleased with today's decision of the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit holding that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) acted unlawfully when it denied requests under Clean Air Act section 126 from the states of New York and New Jersey and the City of New York seeking relief from interstate air pollution from power plants and other sources in nine upwind states. Section 126 is a vital protection for the Adirondack Park's people, waters, and nature from cross-state pollution and acid rain.

The lawsuit was filed by states of New York and New Jersey and the City of New York; the Adirondack Council – joined by Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and the Sierra Club) – participated as intervenors in support of the governmental parties. The lawsuit was seeking to protect Northeast states from smog and acid rain generated by coal-fired power plants in the Midwest. The petitioners asked EPA to set limits on coal-burning power plants and other high-emitting sources so that the downwind states can meet health-based air quality standards. In today's decision in *New York, et al. v. EPA*, the court held that the EPA's test for downwind states to get relief under the statute was unlawful, calling it "at best, was a moving target and, at worst, demanded likely unattainable

standards of proof."

"The Adirondack Park, water, loons, and economy were devastated by the impacts of cross-state air pollution until the science-based 1990 Clean Air Act amendments and bi-partisan enforcement of the good neighbor rule helped reduce Acid Rain impacts on the six-million-acre Park," said William C. Janeway, Executive Director of the Adirondack Council. "The future of the Adirondacks has been threatened by the current EPA's rollback of environmental protections."

"We are grateful to the New York Attorney General Letitia James and her team for their hard work and effective advocacy on behalf of the region's people and resources, as well as to our fellow intervenors, EDF and the Sierra Club, for their fine legal work in the case," said Janeway.

The decision means that the EPA will have to review the downwind jurisdictions' request for relief anew. The Adirondack Council's lawyer in the litigation, Sean H. Donahue, stated: "In light of the court's decision we expect that the EPA will promptly provide the relief urgently needed to protect the health of millions of New York and New Jersey residents – and to protect natural resources including the Adirondack Park from acid rain and other harms."

"The nitrogen pollution from these coal-fired power plants turns into smog and shortens lives in New York City, the lower Hudson Valley and Long Island," said Janeway. "Up here, it contributes to acid rain, killing fish and forests, and making mercury contamination worse. Coal kills."

The Adirondack Council is a privately funded not-for-profit organization whose mission is to ensure the ecological integrity and wild character of the Adirondack Park. . . .

For more information:

William C. Janeway, Adirondack Council, 518-441-7665 (cell)

Source: <https://www.adirondack-council.org/page/press-releases-16/news/court overturns-us-epa-decision-denying-new-york-and-new-jersey-protection-from-upwind-air-pollution-1319.html>

Earth Regeneration



Photo: Drashti04, via Wikimedia Commons

In the Thar desert of Rajasthan. "The unsustainable use of water in modern agriculture and the demands made on aquifers by conurbations is already at breaking point in many places around the globe."

Indian Law Restores Once Dried-up Rivers to Villagers

By Paul Brown
Climate News Network: August 7, 2020

LONDON, UK – Drought and dried-up rivers can spell catastrophe for rural communities that rely on their crops for survival. But villagers in India have shown that both threats can be reversed and livelihoods restored – with the backing of the law.

Having succeeded in restoring their rivers' flow, the villagers faced another battle with their local government and vested interests which wanted to take over the new water supply for their own use. So they went to court, formed their own "water parliament," and wrested back control.

The story began back in 1985 in the parched lands of Rajasthan in north-west India, when villagers were suffering acutely because the rivers they relied on to water their crops were running dry. They resorted to building johads, traditional

hand-dug earth dams, which capture water in the rainy season so that it can soak into the earth and be retained instead of flooding away uselessly.

Often called natural flood management, this approach mimics the natural process of rivers which become blocked by debris and trees – with the beneficial results seen in the complex ecosystems created by beavers, which build their own dams and thereby prevent flooding downstream while also storing water for the dry season.

The first dam was built at the original source of the Arvari river, which for the first 45 kilometres (28 miles) of its length had stopped flowing at all. It took 375 earth dams before the Arvari started to flow again, and 10 years before it became a perennial river once more.

Success was infectious. Altogether, over those 10 years, the residents of 1,000 villages built more than 8,600 johads and

other structures to collect water for use in the dry seasons. Remarkably, five rivers – the Arvari, Ruparel, Sarsa, Bhagani, and Jahajwali – began to flow again, their valleys turning green with crops.

The rivers gained in value again. So the government of Rajasthan, seeing an opportunity to make money, claimed ownership, even awarding fishing licenses to contractors, who were stopped by furious local people.

Fortunately, the courts sided with the protestors and handed control of the river to them after 72 villages formed what they called the Arvari River Parliament to administer the river and allot rights to water resources in a fair manner.

They were lucky: the Indian constitution allows local people to get financial and legal support in cases against perceived injustices. This meant they had access to

Rivers continued on next page

Earth Regeneration

Hearty Congratulations to One of Our Coalition Members!



Rivers *continued from previous page*

justice which they could not otherwise have afforded. The system favors local democracy where it can be shown to work.

Over-exploitation

The Rapid Transition Alliance (RTA) is a UK-based organization which argues that humankind must undertake “widespread behavior change to sustainable lifestyles ... to live within planetary ecological boundaries and to limit global warming to below 1.5°C” (the more stringent limit set by the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change).

The story of the success of the earth dams is told by the RTA as part of its series publicizing global examples of how projects and communities can combat the environmental destruction caused by the effects of climate heating.

The drying-up of water resources, combined with climate change, is one of the key problems of poor river management in many parts of the world. Climates vary markedly, but on rivers in Africa, Europe, and the U.S. vital water resources are also drying up, often through over-exploitation as well as drought.

The Alliance says, “The unsustainable use of water in modern agriculture and the demands made on aquifers by conurbations is already at breaking point in many places around the globe. Climate change is exacerbating this with higher temperatures in already dry places.”

Resisting Usurpers

The Alliance cites a range of schemes used to tackle the problem, similar in essence to Rajasthan’s diversion of the wet season rains by the johads into underground aquifers rather than letting the water run to waste.

Its message is that solutions need to be low-tech, cheap, and achievable by local people acting together democratically to decide what is best for the community. Often this involves resisting local government and big business in their attempts to exploit and profit from the scarce water – frequently the cause of the original damage to the river.

The Alliance says two lessons from Rajasthan translate to other locations and across cultures: first, the physical return of

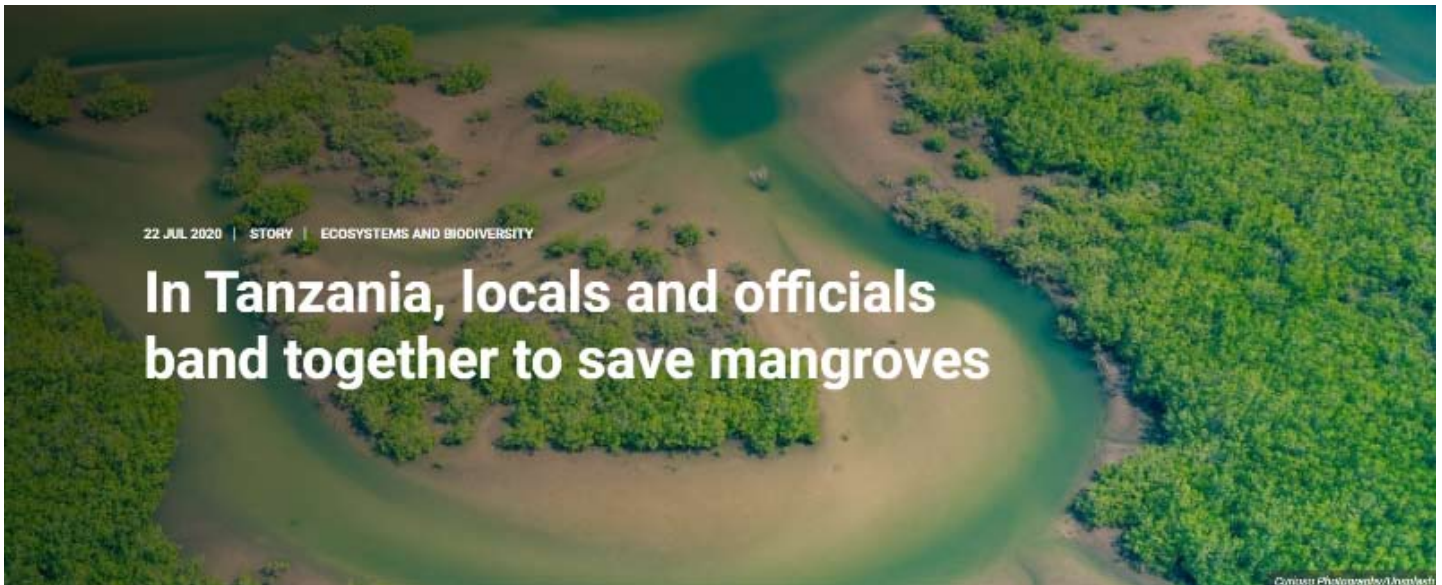
water in a controlled way to an arid environment is possible using low-tech, cheap, accessible solutions.

Second, it says, the guardianship of a natural resource can be achieved effectively by using a communal parliament where all interests are represented equally, and fair decisions are taken.

The Rapid Transition Alliance is coordinated by the New Weather Institute, the STEPS Centre at the Institute of Development Studies, and the School of Global Studies at the University of Sussex, UK. The Climate News Network is partnering with and supported by the Rapid Transition Alliance, and will be reporting regularly on its work. If you would like to see more stories of evidence-based hope for rapid transition, please sign up at <https://www.rapidtransition.org/>. Do you know a story of rapid transition? If so, we’d like to hear from you. Please send us a brief outline on info@climatenewsnetwork.net. Thank you.

Source: <https://climatenewsnetwork.net/indian-law-restores-once-dried-up-rivers-to-villagers/>

Earth Regeneration



22 JUL 2020 | STORY | ECOSYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY

In Tanzania, locals and officials band together to save mangroves

Photo: www.unenvironment.org

Mangroves provide nursery areas for fish, crustaceans, and many endangered species, and also protect shorelines from eroding, shielding humans from flooding, hurricanes, and other storms.

July 26: International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem

“Mangroves store more than five times more carbon than terrestrial forests.”

By Angela Patnode
United Nations Environment Programme

Mangroves, trees that thrive in salt water and are found on coastlines in warmer regions throughout the world, underpin some of the most productive ecosystems on Earth. Not only do they provide nursery areas for fish, crustaceans, and many endangered species, but they also protect shorelines from eroding, shielding humans from flooding, hurricanes, and other storms. Globally, some experts estimate that up to 55 per cent of mangroves have been lost since the 1990s.

“Along with protecting a vibrant ecosystem, the Rufiji Delta project will help Tanzania in meeting its commitments under various Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 14 on ‘Life Below Water’ and Goal 13 on ‘Climate Action,’” said Jared Bosire, Project Manager with the United Nations Environment Programme’s Regional Seas Programme.

Of critical importance, say experts, is the active role local communities will play in the project, particularly in choosing rehabilitation sites and developing harvesting plans.

“I have been involved with many projects over the years that have attempted to reverse the degradation of the mangroves of Rufiji,” said Jumani Yusuf Kikumbe, Outgoing Chairperson of the Nyamisati Village Committee. “These efforts need to include communities from the beginning in an equitable way if they are to be successful.”

IMS and the other project partners hope that lessons from the Rufiji Delta initiative can be applied elsewhere in Tanzania, and even across the entire Western Indian Ocean region where mangroves are under similar pressures.

The initiative is being funded by the Global Environment Facility through the Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Protection of the Western Indian Ocean from Land-Based Sources and Activities, executed by the Nairobi Convention. The convention, part of the United Nations Environment Programme’s Regional Seas programme, serves as a platform for governments, civil society, and the private sector to work together for the sustainable management and use of the Western Indian Ocean’s marine and coastal environment.

Nature-based solutions offer the best way to achieve human well-being, tackle climate change, and protect our living planet. Yet nature is in crisis, as we are

losing species at a rate 1,000 times greater than at any other time in recorded human history and one million species face extinction.

In addition to important moments for decision makers, including the COP 15 on Biodiversity, the 2020 “super year” is a major opportunity to bring nature back from the brink. The future of humanity depends on action now.

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030, led by the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and partners such as the Africa Restoration 100 initiative, the Global Landscapes Forum, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, covers terrestrial as well as coastal and marine ecosystems. A global call to action, it will draw together political support, scientific research, and financial muscle to massively scale up restoration. Help us shape the Decade.

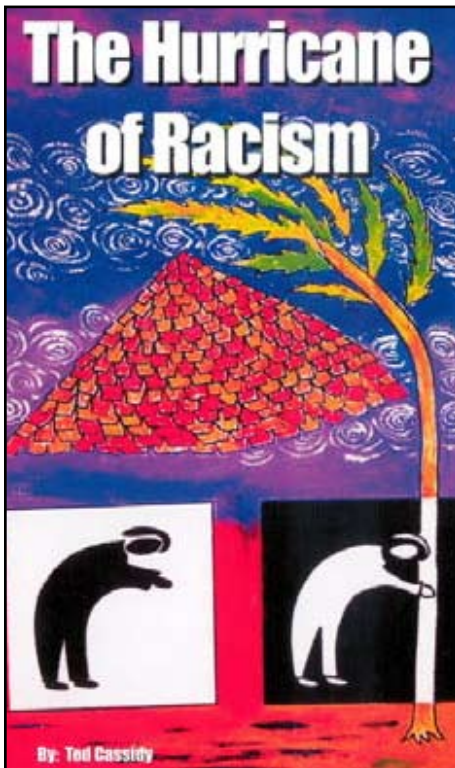
For updates on progress, please check www.nairobiconvention.org.

For more information, please contact Angela Patnode (angela.patnode@un.org).

Source: <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/tanzania-locals-and-officials-band-together-save-mangroves>

Ending Racism

The Nature of Racism and How We Conquer It



By Fr. Ted Cassily, SM, Ohio USA
Written in 2006

Chapter 7 Deeper Causes Operating in the Racist System

Note: We published the Introduction to this book in our January 2020 issue; Chapter 1 in February 2020; Chapter 2 in March 2020, Chapter 3 in July 2020, Chapter 4 in July 13, 2020, Chapter 5 in July 22, 2020, and Chapter 6 in August 4, 2020.

Cornel West is a scholar who gives a clear analysis of the deep causes of racism in America. He recognizes that Black skin cannot be used as a political tool. He shows that Black leaders, to be effective, must not be controlled by emotional ties to a constituency if they are to lead people of color to authentic development.

In his 1994 book *Race Matters* he says that the basic causes of American racism are 1) the eclipse of U.S. economic predominance in the world, 2) the structural transformation of the American economy,

and 3) the moral breakdown of communities throughout the country, especially among the Black working poor and very poor.³⁰

World economics have shifted power into the hands of global companies. Formerly economic power that was controlled by laws in the United States and other countries is now operating with free reign.

The post-war American liberalism, by which economic growth accompanied state intervention for the disadvantaged, ended in the 1960s. The watershed War on Poverty lifted half of America's poor from poverty. It was a brief moment when we bravely confronted our most explosive issues: racism and misdistribution of wealth.

The efforts of progressives have been to reduce poverty by social and affirmative action programs. Unfortunately, these programs have helped middle-class Americans disproportionately due to compromises with the political power of big business.

The second operative cause presented by West is structural economic transformation. The structure of the American economy has been characterized by a contraction of the manufacturing sector and an expansion of the service sector resulting in the narrowing of job opportunities for semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Another structural change – the most crucial insofar as it negatively affects the Black American – has been the mechanization of southern agriculture. Fifty years ago, 50 percent of Black teenagers had agricultural jobs and more than 90 percent of these lived in the South. The recent de-industrialization of northeastern and midwestern cities, along with the entrance of new immigrants, has made it difficult for unskilled Blacks to find jobs.

The third major phenomenon extending racism among American Blacks, according to West, is the breakdown of the moral fabric in the country, especially in Black working poor and very poor communities. When this happens, there is a collapse of meaning in life and a breakdown in supportive networks in family and spiritual communities.

High crime rates, increasing numbers of unwed mothers, and poor academic performances are related to the pervasive-

ness of sexual and military images used in media and advertising. Since the end of the economic boom at the close of the 1960s, American youth have been bombarded by strategies that project sexual activity as instant and violence as the locus of masculine identity. We must recognize that the circumstances into which people are born and live affect how they behave.

West says that the welfare state has not been the cause of the current crisis. The welfare state was a compromise between conservative forces arguing for unregulated markets and liberals seeking broad subsistence rights. Because it is a compromise, it has many flaws. The only feasible alternative to the welfare state is to create more jobs. Attacking the welfare system will not create jobs.

There is a need for a revitalization and moral regeneration of the Black community through intermediate institutions, such as the churches, mosques, or schools. Presently, these institutions are fighting an uphill battle against the media. Yet these institutions are beacons of hope. Their role is both transformative and oppositional to class subordination by capitalist forces.

(In his 2004 book *Democracy Matters*, West shows that there are three fundamental dynamics that are working against democracy in America: Free market fundamentalism, aggressive militarism, and escalating authoritarianism.³¹ West shows that these dynamics are ingrained ways of operating that sweep into their destructive paths all who get in their way. They are also emotional systems and like **hurricanes** have tremendous power. The first dynamic, West maintains, gives economic power to a few to operate like religious fundamentalists. The second, aggressive militarism, is an emotional system, which is led by extreme military powers and the third, escalating authoritarianism, is the use of power without the consent of the people in a democracy. These systems are like racism living in the emotional sway that they generate.)

Another author, Winthrop Jordan describes the fundamental causes of racism in America in his book *White Over Black*.³² He demonstrates that while the economic

Racism continued on next page

Ending Racism

Racism *continued from previous page*

and political powers were creating the slave system, the meaning given to blackness and whiteness played an extraordinarily powerful part in support of the racist system.

White and Black connoted purity and filthiness, virginity and sin, virtue and baseness, beauty and ugliness, beneficence and evil, God and the devil. The English discovery of Black Africans came at a time when the accepted standard of ideal beauty was a fair complexion of rose and white. Negroes not only failed to fit this ideal but also seemed the very picture of perverse negation.

Moreover, Jordan examines the use of scripture and theology to reinforce the economic domination and the cultural prejudice against people of dark skin. He explains that, in the sixteenth century, the curse of Ham (Genesis 9:20-27) was used to legitimize the Black slave trade.

Jordan is able to extrapolate from the social system of economic power the meaning given to whiteness and blackness and the false interpretation of scripture and theology that were the roots of racism in America.

Racism promotes a systemic mindset and institutionalization of the belief that a race is inferior. West shows that skin color has no meaning outside of a system of race conscious people and practices. Blackness is a political and ethical construct. Any valid understanding of Black racism in America cannot begin with claims to racial authenticity; there is no call to Black authenticity, which is not a political tool.

West shows that Judge Clarence Thomas, in his hearings before the Senate Committee as a nominee for the Supreme Court, appealed to this racial authenticity by citing, "...his birth in Jim Crow, Georgia, his childhood as the grandson of a Black sharecropper, his undeniably Black phenotype degraded by racist ideals of beauty, and his gallant Black struggle for achievement in racist America."³⁵

This is an example of the political appeal. This false construct weakens the Black community from speaking the truth. "The very fact that no Black leader could utter publicly that a Black appointee for the Supreme Court was unqualified shows how captive they are to white racist stereotypes."³⁴ The 1994-95 trial of O.J. Simpson demonstrated how strong this political call of race is in America. A major result of racism on the Black community is the mindset that blackness in and of itself is a moral cause for value.

Results of Stability of Racism in America on People of Color

- ▲ Patterns of Black inferiority are repeated in individuals
- ▲ Blackness is perceived as moral cause of evil
- ▲ Black institutions are not strong enough to fight off nihilistic threats
- ▲ Continued negative spirit among Blacks

17

At the heart of the situation of Blacks in America today, West explains, is the nihilistic threat that increasingly pervades Black communities. He says that in the racist system live too many people of color who aren't living the values of life. They are living in despair, a sense that nothing can help them. The reactions of so many people of color during the Katrina Hurricane disaster of 2005 clearly demonstrate this state of hopelessness. West says, neither the appeal to blackness as a political ploy, the liberal call for better government and citizenry programs, nor the conservative plea for self-help programs or business expansion deals with the major "eclipse of hope, the unprecedented collapse of meaning, the incredible disregard for human (especially Black) life and property in much of Black America."³⁵

What he is saying is that racism brings with it this inhuman sense of hopelessness and neither conservative nor liberal programs giving economic help alone will cure the malady of racism's emotional system.

What this refers to is psychological depression and a personal sense of worthlessness and social despair. "Nihilism is to be understood here not so much as a philosophic doctrine that there are no rational grounds for legitimate standards or authority; it is, far more, the lived experience of coping with a life of horrifying meaninglessness, hopelessness, and (most important) lovelessness."³⁶

When Blacks first came to the New World, they created religious and civic institutions that fostered familial and community support, values of service, sacrifice, love, care, discipline, and excellence. Now, however, these traditions are not sufficiently operative to fend off the nihilistic threat. West says that the two significant causes for this are the saturation of market forces and market moralities, as well as the present crisis in Black leadership. West sees this resulting in many Black people being set adrift without resources in confronting the workings of the United States capitalist society.

The market forces seek to make profits by convincing the public to consume. Pleasure – which involves comfort, convenience, and sexual stimulation and which has little to do with past and future moral and other cultural values – has become the goal of the market and of the people. The seductive market edges out non-market values handed down by preceding generations.

A deep-seated anger, rage, and pessimism result from this nihilism. Presently, these feelings are directed primarily towards Black citizens, especially Black women. More recently, it can be detected surfacing in the larger American society.

An aspect of this nihilism is the Black self-hatred in the inability of many Black Americans to love their own Black bodies

Racism *continued on next page*

Ending Racism

Taking on Anti-Muslim Corporations

Email August 11, 2020

Welcome, Iona!

Together we will work at the intersection of racial justice and Wall Street accountability towards a more equitable society.

We believe we cannot achieve economic, environmental, or educational justice until we confront structural racism and take our demands directly to the financial elite profiting off the crises in our communities. At the Action Center on Race and the Economy (ACRE), we dedicate ourselves to doing just that.

We're glad you're here and we'll be in touch soon. In the meantime, follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for constant updates on our campaigns and more.

In solidarity,
The ACRE Team

Crescendo is a project of the Action Center on Race and the Economy (ACRE) that is focused on researching and campaigning against anti-Muslim corporations. Anti-Muslim corporations are those that provide financial support to organizations, politicians, other corporations, or individuals that are engaged in attacks on Muslims, and those whose business practices are anti-Muslim (e.g., companies that discriminate against Muslim workers, profit from war in Muslim countries, profit from the incarceration and/or deportation of Muslims, and provide platforms for or promote anti-Muslim hate groups).

CRESCENDO

[kri-shen-doh]

The word "crescendo" means to gradually get louder or more intense over time. We aim to build the political power and



political voice of the American Muslim community over time, until it reaches a crescendo (i.e., climax, another meaning of the word). "Crescendo" is also derived from the same root as the word "crescent."

Source: https://acrecampaigns.org/campaigns_programs/crescendo/

Racism *continued from previous page*

– "especially their Black noses, hips, lips, and hair."³⁷ Yet, behind the closed doors of white and Black America is the intriguing role of sexuality in American racism. Hatred of the Black body, by the Black, is only a part of this.

West contends that although Black sexuality is a taboo subject in America, a frank discussion of it is a requisite for healthy race relations. While the white supremacist ideology is based on the degradation of Black bodies, Black sexuality is kept taboo because it is a form of Black power over whites. "In fact, the dominant sexual myths of Black women and men portray whites as being 'out-of-control' – seduced, tempted, overcome, overpowered by Black bodies."³⁸ On the one hand, whites claim to control their supremacy over Blacks; while, on the other hand, they are controlled by Black sexuality and, therefore, by Blacks.

For most Black males, this scenario plays out so that, in their youth, power is acquired by stylizing their bodies in such a way to reflect their uniqueness and power over others. It develops a machismo that is a fake form of self-identification. The Black female, because white beauty plays a stronger role in sexual desirability, has psychic bouts with self-confidence, fear of her Black skin and characteristics, and the burden of raising Black children.

What is needed in this convoluted drama, where healthy self-identity is thwarted by hidden sexual myths, is a candid

dialogue about Black sexuality. In the past, struggling Black churches and institutions made "a Faustian pact with white America: avoid any substantive engagement with Black sexuality and your survival on the margins of American society is, at least, possible."³⁹ Now the healthy culture forces need to provide a climate where the myths are debunked,⁴⁰ so sexuality, rather than exploiting the person, is integrated into healthy human living.

This is an example of conversion that West proposes as the remedy to nihilism. New models of collective Black leadership must confront nihilism, which is a disease of the soul, like alcoholism and drug addiction. The confrontation needs to advance through the politics of conversion, by loving and caring, and by a trans-racial coalition that overcomes the white supremacist market forces and creates an atmosphere of affirmation for Black humanity. West, in his epilogue, states, "My aim in this book is to revitalize our public conversation about race in light of our paralyzing pessimism and stratifying cynicism as a people. As a radical democrat, I believe it is late – but maybe not too late – to confront and overcome the poverty and paranoia, the despair and distrust that haunt us."⁴⁰

This chapter has sought to present an analysis of the causes – past and present – of racism in America. It has focused on the thoughts of one author, Cornel West, who bases his analysis on the principles present-

ed in Chapter 1. The description of racism developed by West provides the reader a direction with which to conduct his or her own analysis. Any group willing to do so will come to it with its own preconceived notion and emotionally-charged position. This chapter is offered as an example of how social analysis can be a resource to understand more fully the systemic nature of racism.

Footnotes:

30 Cornel West examines these three causes in light of how liberal and conservative Blacks have responded. Cf. Cornel West, *Race Matters* (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1994), chapter 4.

31 Cornel West, *Democracy Matters* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), pp. 3-7.

32 Winthrop D. Jordan. *White Over Black* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1968).

33 Cornel West. *Race Matters*, p. 37.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

36 *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 125.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 124.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 158.

A pdf of *The Hurricane of Racism* is available for free at <https://www.nacms.org/epubs/special-articles/hurricane-racism>.

Ending Racism



Photo: Amnesty International USA

Demonstrators face police armed with military equipment at a recent racial justice protest.

'The World Is Watching': Amnesty Report Details Human Rights Violations by U.S. Police During Racial Justice Protests

By Julia Conley
Common Dreams: August 4, 2020

In a report titled “The World is Watching,” Amnesty International USA revealed on Tuesday that U.S. police violated the human rights of protesters, medics, journalists, and other people at least 125 times in the first weeks of the current U.S. racial justice uprising.

Between May 26 and June 5, police in 40 states and Washington, D.C. responded to protests with “shocking amounts of excessive force,” according to the organization. Amnesty recorded the widespread “use of militarized equipment [and] excessive force including the use of batons, kinetic impact projectiles, and tear gas and pepper spray.”

Demonstrations over the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless other Black Americans by police officers have continued across the country since Amnesty com-

plied its data, and videos posted to social media have shown hundreds of other violations by police at protests.

The report illustrates how “little has changed in how police respond to protests against police violence in the six years since Ferguson,” Justin Mazzola, Amnesty’s deputy director of research, told *The Hill*, referring to demonstrations against the killing of Michael Brown in 2014, which drew national attention to the Black Lives Matter movement.

The organization reported at the time that U.S. laws governing excessive force by police did not comply with international standards, which stipulate that tear gas and “less lethal” projectiles such as rubber bullets must only be used by police as a last resort.

“There has been a disturbing lack of progress over the past five years in ensuring that police officers use lethal force only when there is an imminent risk of death or serious injury to themselves or others,”

Tuesday’s report reads. “Just three states (California, Washington, and Missouri) have taken important but incremental steps, such as by bringing their state laws on lethal force into compliance with U.S. constitutional standards.”

Amnesty interviewed 50 protesters, journalists, medics, and legal observers who faced human rights violations at protests in late May and early June.

Seventeen-year-old demonstrator Elena Thoman described being tear-gassed by police in Denver, Colorado, saying the experience was “like the feeling when you are chopping onions and then escalates to the point where your skin is burning.”

Actions by the police directly contributed to conditions that may have made Covid-19 more likely to spread at demonstrations, as public health experts warned when the protests began.

“It made me cough a lot – I had to take my mask off because the mask had tear gas

Watching *continued on next page*

Ending Racism



(left)
Ezekiel,
Kaluba,
founder and
leader of
Iganga Women
and Youth
Resource
Centre in
Uganda,
prints out
and binds our
newspaper so
others can read
it easily. Photo
by Kalungi
Juliet
(right)
Nalukwago
Juliet, a
35-year-old
widow, is
reading
Groundswell
News
Journal. Photo
by Ezekiel
Kaluba



Groundswell Stretches Hands Across the Oceans and Across Racial Barriers

Watching *continued from previous page*

in it," said Thoman. "The tear gas got stuck under my mask and made it much worse. So even though there is Covid, I had to take my mask off."

The use of tear gas on protesters "is ultimately a symptom of the very issue that started these protests: unaccountable police violence," the report reads.

Amnesty released its report two weeks after the ACLU sued the Trump administration and the city of Portland, Oregon over federal and local law enforcement agents' attacks on volunteer street medics at ongoing protests in the city. Amnesty's report included accounts of violence against street medics in Columbus, Ohio; Seattle, Washington; and Minneapolis, Minnesota.

National Lawyers Guild (NLG) legal observers Asia Parks and Megan Harrison also described being targeted in Atlanta. The women were clearly identified as legal observers, counseling protesters while wearing green NLG hats, when they were arrested and detained for 16 hours on

June 1. Within a few minutes of the city's curfew, Parks and Harrison were leaving the protest when they heard an officer say, "Get the girl in the green hat."

"I do think we were targeted as legal observers," Harrison told Amnesty. "I think there's no way they didn't know who we were. Police act differently when they know they are being watched. Similar to the arrest of journalists – at the end of day, we need people who can tell this story, collect this information, or the government can do whatever it wants."

The organization called on Congress to pass the PEACE Act, which would prohibit the use of lethal force by police except as a last resort and which was included by House Democrats in the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act. The law has stalled in the Republican-led Senate.

"Federal, state, and local authorities must urgently take decisive action to address systemic racism and systemic misuse of force in the U.S. policing and criminal justice system, including by launching

independent investigations and ensuring accountability in all cases of unlawful lethal use of force by police," wrote Amnesty, adding that the U.S. Justice Department should develop national guidelines on the use of tear gas and "less lethal" projectiles to bring the U.S. into compliance with international standards.

"What our analysis shows is in comparison especially with international law and standards, state statutes are far too permissive and so it's incredibly hard to hold law enforcement criminally liable when they use lethal force in an unjustified manner," Mazzola told *The Hill*.

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Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/08/04/world-watching-amnesty-report-details-human-rights-violations-us-police-during>

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Photos Courtesy World Merit Burundi

The community in Gitega Province, Burundi pitches in to help homeless man build a home after his house was destroyed. Homemade laterite bricks drying in the sun.

World Merit Burundi Seeks Assistance for Vulnerable

Submitted by Francine Nzokira, Burundi

Changemakers must transform most social challenges into actions.

Last week, our local Merit Council President #NzokiraFrancine identified a vulnerable man whose house had been destroyed and he slept under bananas trees. The man lives in Gitega Province, Karera I, Ntobwe Hill in Burundi.

As a changemaker, Francine thinks, "How she can contribute to address that issue?"

That's why, she and the Kids VSLA Members from Gitega hosted an event of making construction materials like adobe bricks. Note that 200 bricks have been produced by 30 students in holidays and 10

adults. On Saturday they will meet again for the same goal.

Be the change!!!! Be the impact!!! Everyone must be guided by humanitarian spirit!!!! We are a charity organization and we are proud to serve our community.

We are looking for support in terms of cement, sheets, and other construction materials. If you want to support this project, please contact us on burundi@worldmerit.org or by phone +25761555324.

Croix Rouge Burundi, UNICEF Burundi, PNUD Burundi, Ambassade des Pays-Bas au Burundi, Ambassade de Belgique au Burundi, Ambassade de France au Burundi, World Merit, Printernet



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Photos Courtesy ALMAJIRI Project

(left) Idris Bilyaminu Ndasadu'Lau teaching young boys English and mathematics in Nigeria. (right) Activist Idris visited an Almajiri school in 2018. "Through counseling, social awareness, and education mobilization we have a strong understanding and relationship with them," he wrote.

Nigerian Man Helping to Educate and Support Children

By Idris Bilyaminu Ndasadu'Lau, Nigeria

Over the past years, it has been documented that nearly half of the drop-out school-age children in Nigeria are Almajiri children who struggle to meet basic needs. That's why in 2017 my organization, Youth Awareness and Peace Development (YAPD), researched to get an adequate knowledge on challenges Almajiri children and a girl-child face in northern Nigeria and other socioeconomic problems. This enabled us to know the grey areas needing attention.

In the process we designed a project named "WHO IS ALMAJIRI?" led by Idris Bilyaminu Ndasadu'Lau, the founder and Global CEO of YAPD. It was established on the determination to pay a contribution and support the socio-cultural development of the Almajiri system in the northern area of Nigeria and also make sure that parents, government, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), community leaders, and society have a role to play in the reformation of the current system.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, as of 2012 about 10 million children who are eligible for the free universal basic education program are out of school. The majority of these 10 million children are male Almajirai attending Qur'anic schools with male teachers who are usually graduates of the same Almajiri school system. Female children usually attend the Almajiri schools from their family homes as day students.

These Almajiri children are among the categories of the most vulnerable poor people in northern Nigeria. Nowadays Almajiris face a lack of support from their parents, guidance, society, and government, which lead many Almajiri to child abuse and child labour. However, the team YAPD continues to research more about how to reform the system sustainable.

INVESTIGATION THROUGH VISITING

The Project also made recommendations for solving these challenges through visit-

ing the Almajiri schools, making awareness and collaborating with many NGOs to share ideas.

Activist Idris Bilyaminu Ndasadu'Lau visited an Almajiri school in November 2018. He has been educating them with mathematics and English.

Through counseling, social awareness and education mobilization we have a strong understanding and relationship with them.

OUR VISION

- To promote equality of the educational systems, both Islamic and Western education.
- To promote social welfare, skills acquisition, and health care support.
- To promote the social activities and rights of Almajiris in the society.

MISSION

To reduce the social inequality and disvalue of Almajiris in the society.

Almajiri continued on next page

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Almajiri continued from previous page



Photos of Almajiri children learning both Islamic (top left) and English ways (top right and bottom left). Idris (center in photo at top right) and the children have a friend in Brazil, Tiago Soares, who made this sign to help. Idris is also helping women and girl children to improve love and peace in their community at large.

Idris Bilyaminu is President of the Rising Twinkle Foundation. We advocate for vulnerable children and women. Almajiri children are among the categories of poor children in Nigeria, who are sent to learn and memorize the Quran education, a system has been in existence for more a century, but at present these children are

suffering from lack of shelter, food, clothes, and they lost their most human basic right and necessity, especially the right to education.

I have been addressing this Almajiri phenomenon since 2018, because the system is a life-long learning so we decided to bring a sustainable reformation toward

integrating it with both Western education and Islamic education.

If you're are interested, to get more information contact us.

WhatsApp: +2348167185897

Email: yapd2020@gmail.com

Twitter and Instagram: yapd2020

Thank you for reading....!

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New College Grad Starts NGO to Help Women and Girls in Uganda

Submitted by Marium Shere Munezero, Uganda

Q: Marium, thank you for connecting with FILIA for this interview. Could we start by understanding a little more about life for women and girls in Uganda?

A: Thank you so much for this great opportunity to talk to you. A few weeks ago a 13-year-old girl was sold off to a 70-year-old man for marriage in exchange for three cows. This was because the family was living in poverty and they were starving. In Uganda, women are living a very hard life. It brings tears whenever I think about it.

Most families here are living below the poverty line. They are unable to provide basic resources for their families to the extent that most families cannot even manage to pay as low as \$20 tuition per semester for their children to acquire education.

Menstruation has also become another big problem because most families cannot afford to buy sanitary towels. So the girls stay at home and use leaves and dirty cloths instead. They end up finding it hard to go to school and drop out. This has left most children unable to go to school and the girls are sold off into marriages at ever younger ages – as young as 12 years – so as to acquire the best bride price. These young girls are raped and there are increased teenage pregnancies, HIV, and also child neglect since these young girls are left alone in the care of their children - who they are totally unable to take care of.

In addition to the above, most women here are considered as 'property', hence they are abused in very many different ways. Most of them don't have jobs and cannot even run for safety from abusive marriages since they are dependent on their abuser. Many have died with no justice rendered to them. The situation has worsened even more due to Covid-19, as Lockdown was put in place. Women have been the most affected and domestic abuse has been the order of the day here.

Q: What made you decide to do something to change the situation?

A: I was once vulnerable. My mother was unable to raise my tuition fees, I



Photo Courtesy NFDO-Uganda

New non-profit raises money to distribute hygiene products to women and their families in Uganda.

thought everything was over for me and was planning on getting married at the age of 16. I was so lucky I happened to be connected to an Irish sponsor who paid all my tuition fees and I was able to complete my Bachelor's degree in Ethics and Human Rights at Makerere University. I was once in the situation that these young girls are in. My mother cried day and night because she didn't want me to get married as my other sister had. My mother smiles now and I have high hopes that these crying women today will smile one day, and that women and girls will have a voice, their rights will be respected, and they will be independent. I hope that girls will view their periods as normal and be proud to be girls. Generally, all this gender-based harassment will end one day and girls and women will live happy lives with their heads held high.

Q: When did you set up NFDO-Uganda and what are its aims?

A: NFDO-Uganda (Nurturing For Future Development Organization) is a

young, grassroots NGO that I founded in 2019. Our aims include:

- Fighting for women's rights and children's rights. This is done through providing tuition, education materials, and sanitary towels to girls and young women.
- Offering developmental interventions to women through training so that they can launch their own initiatives and live independently from their abusive husbands.
- Organizing educational seminars for young girls and women to raise awareness of health and hygiene, particularly menstrual hygiene. And to make them aware of their rights.
- Acting as a voice to the voiceless women and children through human rights activism and representing them in court where necessary.
- Working hand-in-hand with other organizations across the world to make the world a better place for women, children, and teenage girls.
- Preserving the environment as we all know that a polluted environment denies

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people their right to health.

Q: You do work around domestic abuse and education. Could you tell us a little more about these different parts of your work, as well as any other things that your organization is doing?

A: Domestic violence is a general term for any abusive behavior or control over a spouse, and there are many forms of domestic abuse or gender-based violence. For example sexual harassment, physical abuse, psychological abuse, and so on. Women and young girls are the main victims and it has many negative effects including loss of life.

These outcomes have triggered our organization to support all groups who are doing everything possible to help the victims escape, through counselling those who are psychologically affected, providing food relief and other basic needs to those who have escaped the abusive life, and are building their lives from scratch and also skills training so that women can successfully live independently, away from abusive husbands.

Education is the key to a bright future and we want our children to thrive. Uganda is a developing country and most families are poor. Many children are also orphans, having lost their parents to AIDS and other calamities, and we are helping these children to have a future by paying their tuition fees and buying scholastic materials. We also provide sanitary pads for the girls so they can continue with their studies.

Q: Can you share some of the successes that you and your team have had?

A: We have done the following:

- Paid the school fees for 15 girls.
- Trained five women in how to bake cakes locally and earn a small income.
- Trained two women in bracelet making.
- Assisted seven women to live independently from their abusive husbands through helping them to earn their own small income.
- Provided relief to the families of the children under our education projects and the elderly through our relief project during the lockdown. It was not much but left smiles on their faces.
- As a team, we have worked hard on formulating a proposal to stop domestic violence and are awaiting funding.
- We have managed to earn trust from different individuals all over the world and they are helping donate to our

causes whereby a few have committed to a monthly donation. That is a very big achievement for helping to run part of the day-to-day organization activities. Thanks to the beautiful ladies from the UK and USA who have helped the organization so far. Be blessed.

Q: Have you had much support from the authorities for your vital work?

A: Although the Ugandan government is not against our organization, we have not yet received any support from them since the government does not usually fund NGO work...

Q: How can women reading this support the work that you are doing?

A: To all beautiful women reading this, first I love you and salute you for being strong women who:

- Never give up or give in. If you can help us to fulfil our aims and bring a smile on the poor girls' faces and the abused women, we are receiving donations via the Giving Way platform at <https://www.givingway.com/project/6c7fd>.

[givingway.com/project/6c7fd](https://www.givingway.com/project/6c7fd).

- Or you can donate directly to the organization account via bank transfer:

- Account name: Nurturing for Future Development Organization - Uganda

- Account number: 1044201474990

- Bank Name: Equity Bank Uganda limited

- Swift code: EQBLUGKA

- Country: Uganda

Q: Have you anything else you want to share with readers?

A: I appreciate you taking the time to read about our work. This world is full of love and hatred, failure and success, happiness and sadness, gaining and losing, giving and receiving, weakness and strength, and death and life. One can choose to live with negativity or positivity. And although the world always looks at women with negativity, you can change that perspective today. Women are great leaders and the world cannot survive without them, especially if we join hands together as sisters.



Photo Courtesy Courtesy NFDO-Uganda

Children and teens enjoying nutritious food and drinks as part of the mission of NFDO-Uganda.

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Photo: Obedient Malekera

Samuel Mirindi wrote, "It's difficult for young activists like me, especially we in Africa, because most of us just sacrifice our energy, ability, and time to help others and improve lives and development of our dear nations at large. I have never received any funds of support from any national or international NGO or individuals. I started my work since 2017 and find it difficult many times because of the lack of funds, but we can't give up just because we don't have a lot to share."

Let's Help Feed These Kids, OK?

By Samuel Mirindi, Burundi

I am the Visionary and founder of Revitalize the World In Need Organization (REWINO). It is a private initiative of public utility created by young volunteers living in Burundi to help orphaned, abandoned children and those in street situations and to favor their integration into society with the help and contributions of volunteers.

Being at our beginnings we will meet certain economic difficulties. We have made some decent progress on the ground but the means are lacking since the month

of March. We register 850 children of which among them there are orphaned and abandoned children and those on the street. We could not satisfy them all; we just did our best with the little we found.

I finished my studies in social service and community development. I would continue to study environmental protection, but I no longer have anyone to finance my studies. I continue to do research on the environment. Being more than a nature lover I would like to know how I can do to be also a member of the Grassroots Coalition for Environmental

and Economic Justice? [Note from Iona: All anyone needs to do is let me know they want to be a member. Donations are welcome but not necessary. Sam is a member.]

We are looking for donors, volunteers, and also organizations that can help us to work decently.

I am available for all questions and information regarding REWINO.

Contact Samuel:

Email: rewinoorganisation@gmail.com
mirindiwilliam@gmail.com

Phone: +25761348824
+25768987077

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Uganda Group Trying to Help Widow

By Ezekiel Kulaba, Uganda

A WIDOW'S STORY

Greetings. This is a grieving family in Kamuli, Uganda. It lost the father leaving behind two orphans and a sickly widow. This widow has no source of income and her source of living is based on small-scale farming which has been provided by Iganga Women and Youth Recourse Centre (IWAYOREC) in conjunction with Seeds for Peace organization. This family has faced challenges in this season of Covid-19 in terms of buying sanitizers and masks while moving about. We as IWAYOREC are fighting to help this poor family get out

of poverty, the future of these orphans and sickly widow are in your hands, too.

Our goal is to buy clothes, food, and shelter for this poor family so they won't starve and the family will be able to get out of tough time by themselves. Our volunteer Kalungi Juliet will assist in coordination and send us all the details, receipts, videos, and contact information for our record.

I, Kulaba Ezekiel through Iganga Women and Youth resource centre with Seeds for Peace, have been helping with seeds distribution to the marginalized women and youth in Iganga, Uganda.

Our core intention is to help the marginalized women and youth in Iganga,

Uganda. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask Kulaba Ezekiel, Founder and Director, Iganga Women and Youth Resource Centre.

Email: igangawomenandyouth@gmail.com or kulabaezekiel@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Community-Organization/Iganga-women-and-youth-resource-centre-106489551124352/>

WhatsApp: (+256) 702605316

Telephone: +256702605316.

Photos by Kulaba Ezekiel, Founder and Director, Iganga Women and Youth Resource Centre

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Photos Courtesy Prince Kamundala

[NOTE from Iona] *These photos show how hard people work just to get water, which we in America take for granted when it comes effortlessly out of faucets in our kitchens and bathrooms. I was astounded when I found Prince, whom I refer to as "Prince of Water." He has so many wonderful projects that I hope some of our readers will support his work generously.*

Getting Water in DR Congo

By Prince Kitumaini Kamundala, DR Congo (from a French to English website, any errors are Iona's)

Hello I answer in the name of Prince Kitumaini Kamundala. I come from the Democratic Republic of Congo in central Africa, in the province of South Kivu City of Bukavu in the east of the country. My province separates RDCongo and Rwanda and RDCongo and Burundi.

My country was colonized by Belgium. At the time my city of Bukavu was the capital of great Kivu; great Kivu currently is made up of three provinces: North Kivu, South Kivu and Maniema, the chief town and city of Bukavu. The languages spoken here are Swahili, Mashi, Kirega, and French. The language spoken at school in South Kivu province is made up of eight territories which are: Mwenga, Shabunda, Fizi, Walungu, Kabare, Indji, Kalehe, and Bunyakiri with more than 7,000 million inhabitants currently. Our governor is called Théo Ngwabije Kas; the president of the republic is called Etienne Kisekedi.

With many wars and rebellions, and seeing how the people here suffered in respect for the environment, I created an association called Action for the Safeguard of the Environment (ASE), a non-governmental and non-profit organization. We have many projects such as: drinking water supply (this is the worst problem that our people suffer from here, so we started to make water

sources and tank construction). Also, we have projects such as refuse disposal and recycling, reforestation, fishing, breeding, agriculture, construction of public latrines, construction of water wells in the military camps.

Here there are many wars, massacres, rapes of women, children, and many street children.

I created the non-profit and non-governmental association called Peace and Development, again I create an association with a profit called Business and Ecosystem Management for the sake of teaching people how to live independently and teaching young people to be entrepreneurs. Moms and dads live in men's cars ... so when I do all this to develop my country, my people fight against unemployment, create jobs for people, help people to have good environment.

In my province we have Nobel Prize winner Denis Mukwege. My province is attacked by Ebola disease and Covid-19.

So the serious problem that we have, this means why we ask people to help us see a better world, together for a better world and future.

Email: princekitumaini7@gmail.com,

WhatsApp: + 243892435588, + 234974595199

Facebook: action for environment care and business and ecosystem management or Princito Kitumaini Kamundala

LinkedIn: Princito Kitumaini Kamundala

Telegram: Prince Kitumaini Kamundala



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Photo: Allen Tumuhimbise

Lillian Kabahuma works with widows in 30 villages in Uganda teaching them crafts so they will become self-sufficient financially.

Uganda Woman Teaches Crafts to Widows

By Lillian Kabahuma, Uganda

I wish to do many things, Iona. I really need support from any side to do great things. How I can get some support, financially? I'm really failing to do things. Now at least if I can first get \$3,000 to improve in my projects, I can do all the rest for myself because if I can improve my goats and piggery project, within one year I can even build a school for arts and crafts because with goats and piggery project, I can get profit easy. They give birth three times in a year, and they give birth to 8 and above young ones. It's easy to make a big farm in that, I started but now I have only two.

Things are not working well since the floods entered my program and 28 goats

drowned. Today I was calculating like how much can I start again? I found it's like \$1,500. My friend advised me to do both piggery and goats projects; with piggery I can get a quick profit to make my dream come true. My dream is to start up a hand and craft school for young girls, so that at least will bring back hope to them.

I will have to build a new temporary structure, because I don't want to stay in that district of floods.

I had a training with widows this morning to do crafts. Then when they learn to do better things, I will start looking for markets for their things so that they can survive and pay fees for their children. Women here love me so much – I'm humbled – and young girls too. In all that

I do, my front line is women, widows, and young girls, dropout of schools.

I have groups in 30 villages and in town, but today I was deep down in the village with village widows. When I told them about you they were very happy. Tomorrow I'm meeting other widows in another village. God will use me to let all these widows learn to do art and craft to help them in their families, for income, but the problem with them is they have no materials and capital for start, but if they can get capital their life will change.

I will tell them that you love them too, Iona. They wanted to give you a big hen.

You can contact Lillian at kabahumalillian80@gmail.com.

Human Interest

Landmark UK Court Ruling Finds Police Use of Facial Recognition Unlawful.

By Umberto Bacchi

Thomson Reuters Foundation: August 11, 2020

Privacy campaigners hail major victory against surveillance technology in world's first legal challenge against police.

LONDON, UK – A British court said on Tuesday that a police force's use of facial recognition to hunt for suspects was unlawful, in a ruling that privacy campaigners hailed as a "major victory" in their fight against the surveillance technology.

In a case that judges described last year as the first of its kind globally, the Court of Appeal found that South Wales Police (SWP) – the first British force to adopt the technology – had breached privacy, data protection, and equality regulations.

The appellant, Ed Bridges, a resident of the Welsh capital of Cardiff, lost an earlier case in September, when the High Court dismissed his claim that police breached his human rights by scanning his face without consent.

"The Court has agreed that this dystopian surveillance tool violates our rights and threatens our liberties," Megan Goulding, a lawyer for civil rights group Liberty, which represented Bridges, said in a statement. "It is time for the Government to recognize the serious dangers of this intrusive technology. Facial recognition is a threat to our freedom – it needs to be banned."

SWP said it would not appeal the judgment, but remained committed to the careful development and deployment of the technology.

"The whole aim of facial recognition technology is to keep the public safe and assist us in identifying offenders and protecting communities from individuals who pose a risk," Deputy Chief Constable Jeremy Vaughan said in a statement. "I believe the public will continue to support our use of all the available methods and technology



Photo: Hugo Balta/WTTW News

A protester faces off against police in Chicago on Saturday, May 30, 2020.

to keep them safe, providing what we do is legitimate and proportionate."

From malls to airports, facial recognition is increasingly pervasive worldwide, raising concerns over privacy and discrimination, with critics saying the technology is prone to errors and tends to misidentify ethnic minorities.

SWP has been trialing facial recognition since 2017, deploying cameras to check passersby against a database of offenders at dozens of locations, including football matches and rock concerts, according to its website.

An identified suspect can be stopped on the spot, while others are not identified and their data is discarded, it said.

SWP said the technology has resulted in 61 arrests including for robbery and theft, and for court warrants.

Bridges, a 37-year-old civil rights campaigner, said his face was scanned at an

anti-arms protest and on a second occasion when he was Christmas shopping.

While the lower court said last year that the police's action was lawful, Tuesday's ruling upheld three out of five points that Bridges made in his appeal.

The court said the police were given too broad discretion, with no clear guidance on where the technology could be used and who could be put on a watch-list.

It also found that SWP failed to take reasonable steps to ascertain whether its software held racial or gender bias and that an impact assessment, required for processing sensitive data, was deficient.

Bridges said he was "delighted" by the ruling. "We should all be able to use our public spaces without being subjected to oppressive surveillance," he said in a statement.

Source: <https://news.trust.org/item/20200811143409-qxket/>

ATTENDING TO LIFE IS AN ACT OF LOVE.

- Katie Rubinstein -

<https://twitter.com/GratefulnessOrg/status/1283003825171947525>

GRATITUDE CAN TURN A MEAL INTO A FEAST, A HOUSE INTO A HOME, A STRANGER INTO A FRIEND. IT MAKES SENSE OF OUR PAST, BRINGS PEACE FOR TODAY, AND CREATES A VISION FOR TOMORROW.

- Melody Beattie -

<https://www.gratitudeseeds.com/gratitude-transforms-life/>

Consumer Liberation

Our Motto: Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.

Our Slogan: The way forward: cycle back to basics.

Email Iona at groundswellnews@pa.net and she will put you on our email list to receive monthly issues of our climate activist journal. "Every new one makes us stronger," sings Pete Seeger.



Groundswell News

An activist publication bringing readers struggles and successes as well as climate-change news in the U.S. and around the globe. People everywhere are working to make change. Our beautiful journal will inspire and encourage you. Learn more at www.groundswellnews.org. Email groundswellnews@pa.net to be put on our e-list.. It's free but donations are gladly accepted. A project of the 501(c)(3) Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice. Photo <https://www.google.com/search>

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Thank you.



Remember your dreams.



Messages from Our Friends

(For many, English is not their native language.)



Needless to say, this edition is chock-full with the informative articles and beautiful photos that I've come to expect.

Below are a few recommendations for improving GNJ #64.

Allen Hengst, Wire Editor

This is a shame! We have a new government now that's more oriented towards the environment, so I'm hoping to see improvement soon!

I've been meaning to email and thank you for doing such a lovely job on my pieces in the recent issue of *Groundswell News*. The layout's beautiful and it's such a thrill to see my writing published – thank you!

I've no new writing at the moment although I am putting some time into organizing my portfolio! University doesn't start back until October actually, but I've just started back at work (I work in a café!).

I hope you're doing really well!

Surnai Ó Maoildhia, Ireland

Thanks for sharing! I love these words, so much interested. I know it's difficult for young activists like me especially we in Africa because most of us just sacrifice our energy, ability, and time to help others and improve lives and development of our dear nations at large. I have never received any funds support from any national or international NGOs or individuals. I started my work since 2017. I find it difficult many times because of [lack of] funds but we can't give up because we don't have a lot to sharing.

I have something good for you. I was selected for an award in Ghana to take place by October but I don't have an international passport and fees to be there. I was among the young people who were selected for it.

Please don't worry anytime, you need to rest because you have been supporting us always in Africa continents. You are trying so much for us and it's only God can reward you abundantly. Please take a rest. I wish you a healthy body and take your

time.

Your Son,
Activist Idris Bilyaminu Ndasadu'Lau,
Nigeria (WHO IS ALMAJIRI? Project, see pages 21 and 22)

Love it!.. Thank you, ma.
Prince Timmy, Nigeria

Thank you for the email. We will always be there for the contribution of *Groundswell News Journal*. Personally, I am ready to do any work which will require my intervention to feed the newspaper REWINO stories. I will always be at your disposal for the stories of abandoned orphan children and those in situations from the street!

Samuel Mirindi, Uganda (REWINO Organization, see page 25)

I will spend time reviewing this issue of *GNJ*. As for Facebook, it is a black hole that swallows time that isn't coming back.

Bill Boteler, Maryland USA

I have seen the newspaper now, be blessed ever, you're doing a great work, and really you must be getting tired.

I thank you for the all work you're doing. I really feel you get so tired. It's not a simple work, you really put all your mind to set all our stories, what a wonderful woman are you dear. You have a very beautiful heart; you will always be blessed and your family.

Love you my dearest sister Iona,
Lillian Kabahuma, Uganda (See page 28.)

Dear Team,

Thanks for posting my green work on this *Journal*. I feel glad to be part of this valuable climate journal. "I only say that it's the world's first Green Journal."

And I extended my warm wishes to dear editor Ms. Iona Conner Mam for her wonderful contributions and stories.

My great wishes to the team.

Thanking you again,
Akhter Hussain, India

Love it so much. We do appreciate for your efforts to publish this *Groundswell News Journal* and sending you our warm greetings to you and your family. We shall continue reading it and thank you so much for publishing our organization in this paper on pages 22, 27 August 4, 2020 and on page 32, July 22, 2020.

May God bless you so much.

Regards,

Ezekiel Kulaba, Founder and Director of Iganga Women and Youth Resource Centre. (See page 19.)

[*Iona replied*] You, my friend, are TOTALLY AMAZING!!!! I love what you're doing with my newspapers! You can't imagine the big smile on my face and in my heart seeing you standing there on the other side of the world with my newspapers! I might just publish both your email and mine because your idea might spread.

Thank you so much, Ezekiel.

Iona

I am Lawrence P. Bomah, Volunteer Coordinator for Faith Orphanage Home Liberia. I've been following both *Groundswell News* and you are also my friend on Facebook. Faith Orphanage home will need your help as well the orphans at the home are faced with lot of challenges.

[**Note:** Iona sent *Guidelines for submitting stories.*]

Lawrence P. Bomah, Liberia

Thanks for the amazing article Mom. Keep inspiring us and stay strong.

Hanson G. Blayon, Liberia

This is great, thank you! We have started sharing here in Zimbabwe. Thank you for including our billboard donation in this magazine.

Stay blessed.

Jussa Kudherezera, Zimbabwe (Manica Youth Assembly, see page 10)

[**Subject line:** Appreciation for sending us *Groundswell News Journal*] We thank you for your efforts to publish this paper.

Messages continued on next page

Messages *continued from previous page*

We are now in touch with other people from different countries in the world.

Thank you and God bless you.

Ezekiel Kulaba, Uganda

[*Iona's reply*] Dearest Ezekiel,

In these few words, you have made my dream come true!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I've been feeling bad that my attempt in publishing stories of great projects needing funding are basically a failure for fundraising. I recently switched my dream to at least enabling readers to network with and support each other. Your short email tells me that you recognize that gift from my fingertips to you, as a leader in your community, and to my other readers worldwide.

Thank you from my heart and you're welcome.

May God bless you, too.

Iona

Finally read your latest newsletter (#64) with its rich and engaging stories along with sobering news of the state of our world. Inspirational and reality checking in equal measure. Really appreciate your networking with so many fine people working to defend the Earth and ourselves.

Love,

Robert Burrowes, Australia

My best wishes and my grandma,

I have to say by sorrow in my heart that I want to spread peace and love in all the countries, and I have a big plan for it. Ever since I have been looking, most people hate other countries, other religions, and other languages and cultures too, because they really don't know what is real in life.

I think different countries, different languages, different religions, don't matter. We have the same kinds of feelings and same kinds of emotions, and that is the one important similarity of all humanity in all countries.

We should live as a human. All religions have good guidelines to feed them understanding and how to love each other and

how to live in peace, but nobody wants to understand it. But I believe that I can change every dirty people's minds. I can transform their minds. It's my belief that if Covid-19 viruses can spread in whole countries, so I believe in myself that I can spread peace and love (non-judgment love) in the whole world.

I just need a big and huge stage or big platform for it, and I believe that I can change most people's minds, and then they will know what is real in life. Actually, they are following life like a shepherd and they really don't know what we should do in our life.

Your admirable,

Mukesh Nand, India

Valerie Wood-Gaiger to her Learn with Grandma International groups:

World-wide the virus is steadily growing with no sign of fall-off !!

Living as I do in a very rural area, I have not felt the need to wear a mask but as the Pandemic is growing around the world and is NOT going away – in fact now that the Geni is out of the bottle it looks as if will be with us permanently!!

From now on I will wear a mask whenever social distancing is difficult. Wearing a mask in public must become as normal as wearing knickers!

I'm sure us girls will find ways to make them look pretty. We can smile with our eyes!!

We want to get back to normal but that is not going to happen!

As well as accepting the FACT that this virus is here to stay – there is a Worldwide recession looming because of the costs of the virus. Many people will lose their jobs and businesses.

We need a new Normal; more sustainable normal.

We have been using up the Earth's resources as if there were no tomorrow! We need to stop being so greedy! To use less, buy less, recycle more, grow our own food – use Zoom instead of jumping on a plane! Tread more lightly on the Earth.

Then our Mother Earth can go on and on – as she has always done – providing all our needs and the needs of our Grandchildren's grandchildren and all the generations that will follow us.

Let us be the generation that saves the future!!

Here is the latest news – Elisha – a refugee in a huge camp in Kenya wrote – “In Kakuma Refugee Camp we are helping Ladies/Women to Depend themselves by learning to HAND SEW pads.”

I was thrilled & blown away when Elisha told me that – More than three hundred-300+!!! ladies and women have started to hand sew. They cannot afford to buy sewing machines.

Elisha Bonne Idée Byamungu had not realized that it is possible to hand sew them. I just said – show the ladies the film!

They got the message and started sewing using any soft material they had – an old tee shirt is fine.

If you should decide to try in your community – do post to this group and to Learn with Grandma in your country. It will help spread the message and encourages me to keep on trying!

How to Make Home-Made Sanitary Pads

Stella Namuganza, a registered nurse and enrolled midwife shares how one can make a sanitary pad using basic cheap materials available to each and every one of us. Please feel free to share this video with the rest of your friends. WSWM Alumni Peer Educator. (“Kaveela” means polythene)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o88uLMpHlw0&fbclid=IwAR0ZGB9C_tp43s08MUb_3eXMIImOFMnRB9Y3jOYjQLuTsVexT_IQqNwgDIJU

Mrs. Valerie Wood-Gaiger, MBE, Wales
+44(0) 1550 721884 07484 2263390
valwoodgaiger@aol.com

Beautiful newsletter Iona, stunning, your love and devotion to a better world for all shines through each page.

Alanna Hartzok, Pennsylvania USA

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE? . . . THE GREAT REVELATION . . . NEVER DID COME. INSTEAD THERE WERE LITTLE DAILY MIRACLES, ILLUMINATIONS, MATCHES STRUCK UNEXPECTEDLY IN THE DARK.

- Virginia Woolf -

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/15887-what-is-the-meaning-of-life-that-was-all--a>