

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.

A Celebration of Youth. www.groundswellnews.org. Issue No. 67: September 22, 2020

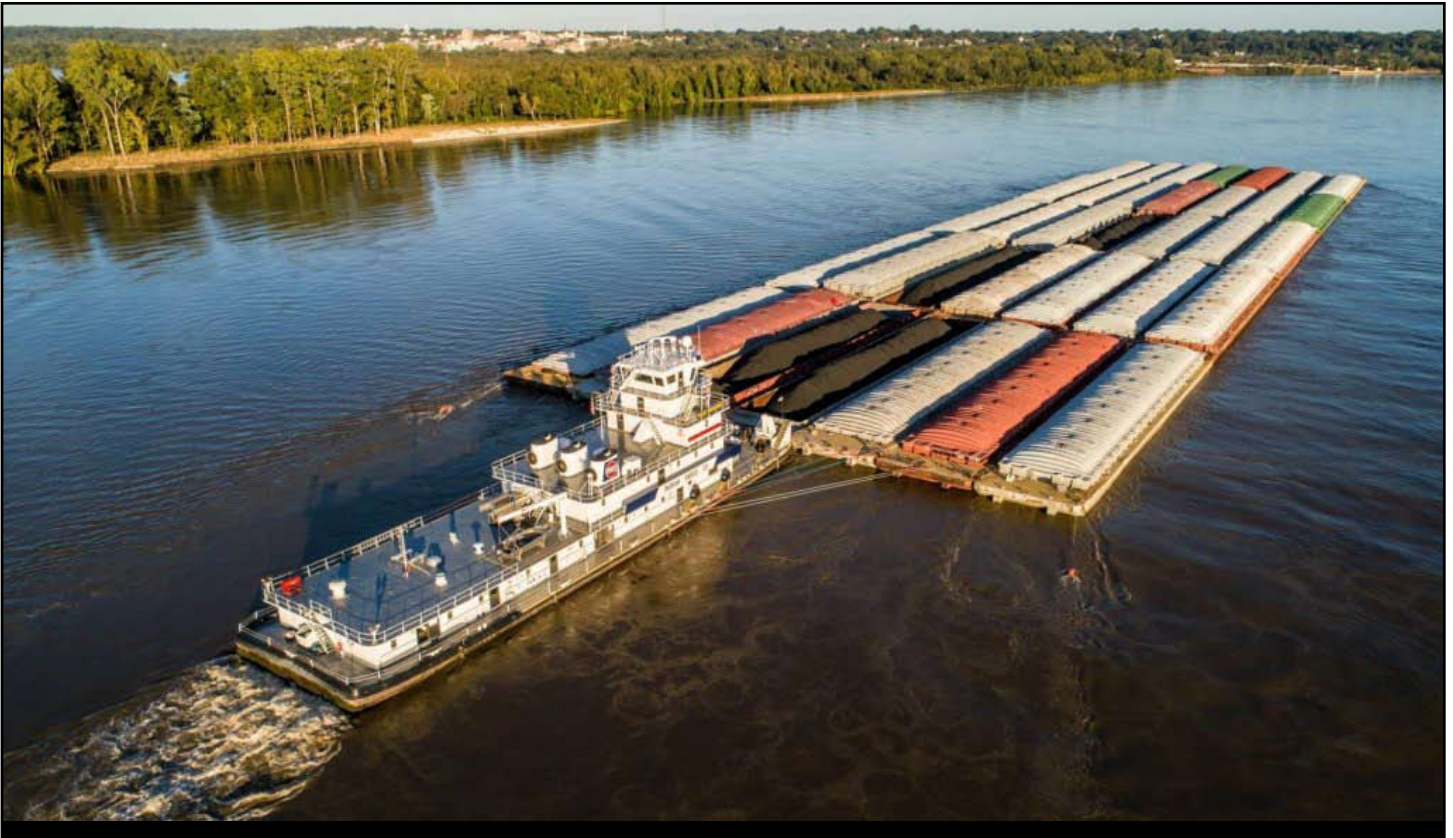


Photo: Justin Wilkens on Unsplash

Areas like the Mississippi delta are vulnerable to river avulsions, the earthquakes of rivers. They are sudden and sometimes catastrophic natural events that occur with statistical regularity, shifting the direction of major rivers.

Rivers Flood, Seas Rise – Land Faces Erosion

By Tim Radford
Climate News Network: September 7, 2020

Polar melting cannot be separated from farmland soil erosion and estuarine flooding. All are part of climate change.

LONDON, UK – Climate heating often ensures that calamities don't come singly: so don't forget what erosion can do.

In a warmer world the glaciers will melt ever faster to raise global sea levels ever higher. In a wetter world, more and more topsoil will be swept off the farmlands and downriver into the ever-rising seas.

And the pay-off of silt-laden rivers and rising sea levels could be catastrophic floods, as swollen rivers suddenly change

course. Since many of the world's greatest cities are built on river estuaries, lives and economies will be at risk.

Three new studies in two journals deliver a sharp reminder that the consequences of global heating are not straightforward: the world responds to change in unpredictable ways.

First: the melting of the ice sheets and the mountain glaciers. Researchers warn in

Rivers continued on page 3

CONTENTS

CLIMATE
EMERGENCY
PAGES 1 - 10

EARTH
REGENERATION
PAGES 11 - 15

ENDING
INEQUALITY
PAGES 16 - 24

HUMAN
INTEREST
PAGES 25 - 29

MESSAGES FROM
READERS
PAGES 31 - 33

What is the Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice?

Coalition Founders: John and Iona Conner

Editor/Publisher: Iona Conner

Wire Editor: Allen Hengst

Established: September 2013

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: Ngo Banfogha, Fr. Ted Cassidy, Derrick Jensen, Princito Kitumaini Kamundala, Jussa Nhari Kudherezera, Idris Bilyaminu Ndasadu'Lau, Samuel Mirindi, Kristen Rundstein, Ssengendo Yasin Sigalaminat, Valerie Wood-Gaiger

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

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.

Fair Use Law: <https://copyright.gov/fair-use/more-info.html>

Fair use is a legal doctrine that promotes freedom of expression by permitting the unlicensed use of copyright-protected works in certain circumstances. Section 107 of the Copyright Act provides the statutory framework for determining whether something is a fair use and identifies certain types of uses – such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research – as examples of activities that may qualify as fair use. Section 107 calls for consideration of the following four factors in evaluating a question of fair use:

(1) Purpose and character of the use, including whether the use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes.

(2) Nature of the copyrighted work.

(3) Amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole.

(4) Effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.



Fair Use Logo

Iona's Column:

How Long Can This Inequality Last?



Dearest Beautiful Global Family,

Day by day, I live my life in the United States in a safe neighborhood. When I open my refrigerator, I imagine my friend in Africa not even having a refrigerator. When I turn on the lights, I imagine my friend in Africa not always having electricity at his fingertips and I try to fumble around with minimal lighting. When I drive on smooth roads, I imagine my friend in Africa driving on rutted and sometimes flooded roads. When I'm too hot in the summer and turn on the air conditioning (which I really, really try not to do), I imagine my friend in Africa sweltering with no relief. When I go to the food store and see too many options wrapped in unnecessary, frivolous packaging, I imagine my friend in Africa living on noodles, yam, and eggs. When I turn on my oven to bake brownies for my son's birthday party, I imagine my friend in Africa laying out sticks to start a fire to cook rice for his family.

How on Earth could I survive like they are?

It is so grossly unfair that all I can do is shake my head in dismay, try my very best to keep cutting down on the way I live, and keep doing my best through this newspaper to make things more equal, more fair, more compassionate everywhere.

With Love and hope for all the poor people in the world,

Iona

Rivers continued from page 1

the journal *Nature Climate Change* that if the loss of ice from Antarctica, Greenland, and the frozen rivers continues, then climate forecasters and government agencies will have to think again: sea levels could rise to at least 17 centimeters (7 inches) higher than the worst predictions so far.

That means an additional 16 million people at hazard from estuarine floods and storm surges.

In the last 30 years, the flow from the Antarctic ice cap has raised sea levels by 7.2 millimeters (0.3 inch), and from Greenland by 10.6 millimeters (0.4 inch). Every year, the world's oceans are 4 millimeters (0.157 inch) higher than they were the year before.

"Although we anticipated the ice sheets would lose increasing amounts of ice in response to the warming of the oceans and the atmosphere, the rate at which they are melting has accelerated faster than we could have imagined," said Tom Slater of the University of Leeds, in the UK, who led the research. "The melting is overtaking the climate models we use to guide us, and we are in danger of being unprepared for the risks posed by sea level rise."

Dr. Slater and his colleagues are the third team to warn in the last month that observations of climate already match the worst-case scenarios dreamed up by forecasters preparing for a range of possible climate outcomes.

Erosion Risk Rises

The latest reading of glacial melt rates suggests that the risk of storm surges for many of the world's greatest cities will double by the close of the century. But coastal cities – and the farmers who already work 38% of the terrestrial surface to

feed almost 8 billion people – have another more immediate problem.

In a warmer world, more water evaporates. In a warmer atmosphere, the capacity of the air to hold moisture also increases, so along with more intense droughts, heavier rainfall is on the way for much of the world. And the heavier the rain, or the more prolonged the drought, the higher the risk of soil erosion.

In 2015 the world's farmers and foresters watched 43 billion tons of topsoil wash away from hillsides or blow away from tilled land and into the sea. By 2070, this burden of silt swept away by water or blown by wind will have risen by between 30% and 66%: probably more than 28 billion tons of additional loss.

This could only impoverish the farmland, according to a study by Swiss scientists in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. It could also impoverish people, communities, and countries. The worst hit could be in the less developed nations of the tropics and subtropics.

But the flow of ever-higher silt levels into ever-rising seas also raises a new hazard: hydrologists call it river avulsion. It's a simple and natural process. As conditions change, so rivers will naturally change their flow to spill over new floodplains and extend coastal lands.

Survival in Question

But river avulsions can also be helped along by rising sea levels. Since 10% of humanity is crowded into rich, fertile delta lands, and since some of the deadliest floods in human history – two in China in 1887 and 1931 claimed six million lives – have been caused by river avulsions, the question becomes a matter of life and

death.

U.S. scientists report, also in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, that rising sea levels alone could make abrupt river avulsion more probable, especially as delta lands could be subsidizing, because of groundwater and other extraction.

The dangers of avulsion are affected by the rate of sediment deposit in the river channels, and this is likely to rise with sea levels. This in turn raises the level of the river and eventually a breach of a levee or other flood defense will force the river to find a swifter, steeper path to the sea.

Cities such as New Orleans and the coastal communities of the Mississippi delta are already vulnerable. "Avulsions are the earthquakes of rivers," said Michael Lamb, of California Institute of Technology, one of the authors. "They are sudden and sometimes catastrophic natural events that occur with statistical regularity, shifting the direction of major rivers. We are trying to understand where and when the next avulsions will occur."

Tim Radford, a founding editor of Climate News Network, worked for The Guardian for 32 years, for most of that time as science editor. He has been covering climate change since 1988.

Source: <https://climatenewsnetwork.net/rivers-flood-seas-rise-and-land-faces-erosion/>

Note from the Editor: There is a super interesting, 2 minute, 29 second video about dredging the Mississippi River in the U.S. at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMrROTbVs4c>

**DO NOT BE DAUNTED BY THE ENORMITY OF THE
WORLD'S GRIEF. DO JUSTLY, NOW. LOVE MERCY, NOW.
WALK HUMBLY, NOW. YOU ARE NOT OBLIGATED TO
COMPLETE THE WORK, BUT NEITHER ARE YOU FREE
TO ABANDON IT.**

Interpretive translation of Talmudic texts

<https://humaneeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/talmud-worlds-grief-hand-sunrise-quote.jpg>

Climate Emergency

Open Letter to Reclaim Environmentalism: Please Sign

By Derrick Jensen, California

Please read the letter below,
then join 1,763 others
in signing it.

Available translations at <https://derrickjensen.org/open-letter-to-reclaim-environmentalism>: Lire en français, Auf Deutsch lesen, Leer en español, Leia em português, Citește în română.

Once, the environmental movement was about protecting the natural world from the insatiable demands of this extractive culture. Some of the movement still is: around the world grassroots activists and their organizations are fighting desperately to save this or that creature they love, this or that plant or fungi, this or that wild place.

Contrast this to what some activists are calling the conservation-industrial complex – big green organizations, huge “environmental” foundations, neo-environmentalists, some academics – which has co-opted too much of the movement into “sustainability,” with that word being devalued to mean “keeping this culture going as long as possible.” Instead of fighting to protect our one and only home, they are trying to “sustain” the very culture that is killing the planet. And they are often quite explicit about their priorities.

For example, the recent “An Open Letter to Environmentalists on Nuclear Energy,” signed by a number of academics, some conservation biologists, and other members of the conservation-industrial complex, labels nuclear energy as “sustainable” and argues that because of global warming, nuclear energy plays a “key role” in “global biodiversity conservation.” Their entire argument is based on the presumption that industrial energy usage is, like Dick Cheney said, not negotiable – it is taken as a given. And for what will this energy be used? To continue extraction and drawdown – to convert the last living creatures and their communities into the final dead commodities.

Their letter said we should let “objective evidence” be our guide. One sign of intelligence is the ability to recognize patterns: let’s lay out a pattern and see if we

can recognize it in less than 10,000 years. When you think of Iraq, do you think of cedar forests so thick that sunlight never touches the ground? That’s how it was prior to the beginnings of this culture. The Near East was a forest. North Africa was a forest. Greece was a forest. All pulled down to support this culture. Forests precede us, while deserts dog our heels. There were so many whales in the Atlantic they were a hazard to ships. There were so many bison on the Great Plains you could watch for four days as a herd thundered by. There were so many salmon in the Pacific Northwest you could hear them coming for hours before they arrived. The evidence is not just “objective,” it’s overwhelming: this culture exsanguinates the world of water, of soil, of species, and of the process of life itself, until all that is left is dust.

Fossil fuels have accelerated this destruction, but they didn’t cause it, and switching from fossil fuels to nuclear energy (or windmills) won’t stop it. Maybe three generations of humans will experience this level of consumption, but a culture based on drawdown has no future. Of all people, conservation biologists should understand that drawdown cannot last, and should not be taken as a given when designing public policy – let alone a way of life.

It is long past time for those of us whose loyalties lie with wild plants and animals and places to take back our movement from those who use its rhetoric to foster accelerating ecocide. It is long past time we all faced the fact that an extractive way of life has never had a future, and can only end in biotic collapse. Every day this extractive culture continues, 200 species slip into that longest night of extinction.

We have very little time left to stop the destruction and to start the repair. And the repair might yet be done: grasslands, for example, are so good at sequestering carbon that restoring 75 percent of the planet’s prairies could bring atmospheric CO₂ to under 330 ppm in 15 years or less. This would also restore habitat for a near infinite number of creatures. We can make similar arguments about reforestation. Or consider that out of the more than 450 dead zones in the oceans, precisely one has repaired itself.

How?

The collapse of the Soviet Empire made agriculture unfeasible in the region near

the Black Sea: with the destructive activity taken away, the dead zone disappeared, and life returned. It really is that simple.

You’d think that those who claim to care about biodiversity would cherish “objective evidence” like this. But instead the conservation-industrial complex promotes nuclear energy (or windmills).

Why?

Because restoring prairies and forests and ending empires doesn’t fit with the extractive agenda of the global overlords.

This and other attempts to rationalize increasingly desperate means to fuel this destructive culture are frankly insane. The fundamental problem we face as environmentalists and as human beings isn’t to try to find a way to power the destruction just a little bit longer: it’s to stop the destruction.

The scale of this emergency defies meaning. Mountains are falling. The oceans are dying. The climate itself is bleeding out and it’s our children who will find out if it’s beyond hope. The only certainty is that our one and only home, once lush with life and the promise of more, will soon be a bare rock if we do nothing.

We the undersigned are not part of the conservation-industrial complex. Many of us are long-term environmental activists. Some of us are Indigenous people whose cultures have been living truly sustainably and respectfully with all our relations from long before the dominant culture began exploiting the planet. But all of us are human beings who recognize we are animals, who like all others need livable habitat on a living Earth. And we love salmon and prairie dogs and black terns and wild nature more than we love this way of life.

Environmentalism is not about insulating this culture from the effects of its world-destroying activities. Nor is it about trying to perpetuate these world-destroying activities. We are reclaiming environmentalism to mean protecting the natural world from this culture.

And more importantly, we are reclaiming this Earth that is our only home, reclaiming it from this extractive culture. We love this Earth, and we will defend our beloved.

Source and sign the letter: <https://derrickjensen.org/open-letter-to-reclaim-environmentalism/>

Climate Emergency



Photo: Vince Gx on Unsplash

Svalbard, in whose waters temperatures have risen at 1.5°C every decade for the last 40 years.

Arctic Heating Races Ahead of Worst-Case Estimates

By Tim Radford

Climate News Network: September 2, 2020

Arctic heating is happening far faster than anybody had anticipated. And the ice record suggests this has happened before.

LONDON, UK – An international team of scientists brings bad news about Arctic heating: the polar ocean is warming not only faster than anybody predicted, it is getting hotter at a rate faster than even the worst-case climate scenario predictions have so far foreseen.

Such dramatic rises in Arctic temperatures have been recorded before, but only during the last Ice Age. Evidence from the Greenland ice cores suggests that temperatures rose by 10°C or even 12°C, over a period of between 40 years and a century, between 120,000 years and 11,000 years ago.

“We have been clearly underestimating the rate of temperature increases in the atmosphere nearest to the sea level, which has ultimately caused sea ice to disappear

faster than we had anticipated,” said Jens Hesselbjerg Christensen, a physicist at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, one of 16 scientists who report in the journal *Nature Climate Change* on a new analysis of 40 years of data from the Arctic region.

They found that, on average, the Arctic has been warming at the rate of 1°C per decade for the last four decades. Around Norway’s Svalbard archipelago, temperatures rose even faster, at 1.5°C every 10 years.

During the last two centuries, as atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide climbed from an average of around 285 parts per million (ppm) to more than 400 ppm, so the global average temperature of the planet rose: by a fraction more than 1°C.

The latest study is a reminder that temperatures in the Arctic are rising far faster than that. And the news is hardly a shock: within the past few weeks, separate teams of researchers, reporting to other journals, have warned that Greenland – the biggest single reservoir of ice in the northern hemisphere – is melting faster than ever; more alarmingly, its icecap is losing mass at a rate that suggests the loss could become irreversible.

Researchers have also confirmed that the average planetary temperature continues to rise inexorably, that the Arctic Ocean could be free of ice in summer as early as 2035, and that the climate scientists’ “worst-case” scenarios are no longer to be regarded as a warning of what could happen: the evidence is that what is happening now already matches the climate forecaster’s worst case. The latest finding implicitly and explicitly supports this flurry of ominous observation.

“We have looked at the climate models analyzed and assessed by the UN Climate Panel,” said Professor Christensen. “Only those models based on the worst-case scenario, with the highest carbon dioxide emissions, come close to what our temperature measurements show over the past 40 years, from 1979 to today.”

Tim Radford, a founding editor of Climate News Network, worked for The Guardian for 32 years, for most of that time as science editor. He has been covering climate change since 1988.

Source: <https://climatenetwork.net/arctic-heating-races-ahead-of-worst-case-estimates/>

Climate Emergency

'Ban Adverts for Cars That Damage the Climate'

By Alex Kirby

Climate News Network: September 1, 2020

Tobacco advertisements are often banned these days. So why not ban adverts for gas-guzzling cars that damage the planet? "Those who manipulate the unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power."

LONDON, UK – Many countries now ban adverts for tobacco products and some now limit sales of junk food, to protect public health. All of them have reduced advertising, or ended it outright.

So, campaigners argue, why not do the same with adverts which promote high-carbon products and lifestyles, damaging people's health and heating the planet?

There's growing pressure for bans like that in the United Kingdom, with a focus on ending the promotion of highly-polluting cars, gas-guzzling 4x4s, also known as SUVs, an argument developed by a campaign called Badvertising.

The Rapid Transition Alliance (RTA) is a UK-based group 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).

As part of its work to publicize how projects and communities can withstand the effects of climate heating, the Alliance too is supporting Badvertising, which it is convinced can succeed.

40-Year Resistance

The RTA argues that advertising bans have worked before, provided they have had three factors in their favor: strong evidence from trusted sources; clear campaigning; and a threat to public health, which policymakers take seriously.

Even so, it says, powerful moneyed interests will oppose changes that threaten their income. Advertising is one key way of driving consumption, encouraging us to "shop till we drop." In 2020 world expenditure on advertising is expected to reach U.S. \$691.7 billion (£520 billion), up by 7.0% from 2019, despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

That's more than China's infrastructure investment program after the 2008 financial crisis, and over four times more than the \$153 billion provided to developing



Photo Courtesy Rapid Transition Alliance

Worse than tobacco promotion for human and planetary health?

countries in 2018 by the 30 members of the OECD's development assistance committee.

With tobacco, once its huge public health impact became clear – 100 million people died in the last century from its use, and the figure for this century is expected to be 10 times greater – campaigners had to work tirelessly for another 40 years until its promotion was banned.

The tobacco industry meanwhile resisted fiercely, arguing, for example, that adverts didn't increase smoking but merely encouraged people to switch brands, despite evidence to the contrary.

For climate and health campaigners today there are valuable lessons to be learned from the fight against tobacco, the RTA says. Both tobacco smoke and car exhausts contain similar toxins that directly threaten human health.

Underlying health conditions mean that poorer households are worse hit than richer ones by the effects of tobacco and air pollution from vehicles, and so are more vulnerable too to health crises like Covid-19.

Junk food is another target for campaigners against advertising, particularly where child obesity is an issue. In London, a ban on unhealthy food advertising was introduced in 2018, to widespread public approval. The UK government is now set to implement stricter rules on how junk food is advertised and sold across the country.

This year the Mexican state of Oaxaca banned the sale of sugary drinks and high-

calorie snack foods to children. Mexicans drink 163 litres of soft drinks a year per head – the world's highest level – and they start young. About 73% of Mexicans are considered overweight, and related diseases such as diabetes are rife.

A survey by *El Poder del Consumidor* (in Spanish) – a Mexican consumer advocacy group and drinks industry critic – found 70% of schoolchildren in a poor region of Guerrero state reported having soft drinks for breakfast. "When you go to these communities, what you find is junk food. There's no access to clean drinking water," said Alejandro Calvillo, the group's director.

Doubt-Spreading

In 2006, a U.S. district judge ruled that tobacco companies had "devised and executed a scheme to defraud consumers ... about the hazards of cigarettes, hazards that their own internal company documents proved they had known about since the 1950s." After four decades of delay, obfuscation, and the spreading of doubt by the industry, the tobacco companies were found guilty.

In the UK, the first calls to restrict advertising came in 1962 from the Royal College of Physicians. The general advertising of tobacco products was banned in stages from 2003. But concern at the damage that advertising can cause continues.

Communities in the UK city of Bristol recently acted against the bright LCD billboards which have proliferated there, causing light pollution and using huge amounts

Badvertising *continued on next page*

Climate Emergency

Groundswell Networking and Growing

Everyone please look at Learn with Grandma International (LwG) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1489818234620407/?fref=ts>

Do listen to Diana Beresford-Kroeger – Unfortunately I can't share her beautiful film – Call of the Forest the Forgotten Wisdom of Trees – but I could see it on YouTube!

We NEED to stop the huge destruction of our forests.

YOU can help – if everyone of us on the planet planting a tree – Billions of trees would live and grow!

Celebrate a Marriage, Graduation, a birth, a visit, or as a living reminder of a loved one you can no longer hug. Plant a fruit tree & the tree will nourish you, too.

Everything you plant will give you food or pleasure and will repay you by helping to clean the air we breathe and save our planet for future generations.

Part of LwG's message is that God gave us a beautiful world. It is our home! Let's take good care of our home & our neighbours.

You are all welcome to join LwG International. If you are on Facebook, I can

then direct you to the group for your country. I'm a granny, a great-granny, living in Wales. I started Learn with Grandma as my retirement project. It's now an international network with Facebook groups from Australia to Canada, Ukraine to South Africa!! LwG is promoting Intergenerational Learning & Active Ageing. The main aim is share ideas of how to use the Internet as a bridge to reunite the generations and help break down the digital age gap by sharing skills, love, & knowledge across the generations. All my suggestions are achievable, affordable, and sustainable!

Article in an American magazine written in October 2019 – it will tell you more about me & Learn with Grandma. Of course I will be delighted to answer any queries. The FIRST non-American to have been chosen – ever! <https://www.grandmagazine.com/2019/09/2019-grandparent-of-the-year/>

God Bless & Keep safe!
Mrs. Valerie Wood-Gaiger, Wales UK
Phone: +44(0) 1550 721884 07484 2263390
Email: valwoodgaiger@aol.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1489818234620407/>

Dear Ssengendo Yasin Signalaminat,

Iona has told me about Jinja Church Children's Home. I visited Jinja while I was in Uganda in 2014. After I returned home to Wales I started to promote Learn with Grandma on Facebook and the best way for us to be in contact & for me to help you is via the group for Uganda <https://www.facebook.com/groups/344240262301355/>

Mrs. Valerie Wood-Gaiger



Badvertising *continued from previous page*

of energy to advertise a range of goods and services. A Bristol initiative to help residents object to planning applications for new digital advertising screens has now led to a wider network, Adfree Cities.

Advertising is part of the broader public relations industry. The RTA quotes an American citizen, often called the father of public relations, Edward Bernays, who worked for the U.S. Committee on Public Information, a body for official propaganda during the First World War.

Bernays once wrote, "Those who manipulate the unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power. We are governed, our minds moulded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested largely by men we have never heard of."

Doctors' Crucial Intervention

One turning point in the battle against tobacco industry propaganda in the UK, the RTA says, was the involvement of the doctors' trades union, the British Medical Association (BMA). This brought the people the public trusted most – their family doctors – into direct confrontation with the tobacco industry.

But the medical profession was to play

another crucial part in protecting public health on a far wider front in 2017, when an article in *The Lancet*, the leading British medical journal, featured a major study, this time with evidence supporting the climatologists' findings that climate change is a growing health hazard.

In response, Simon Dalby of Wilfrid Laurier University in Canada asks why we don't use advertising restrictions for climate change in the same way that we have with other public health hazards like smoking. Hundreds of millions of people around the world are already suffering because of climate change, he points out. Infectious diseases are spreading faster as the climate heats, hunger and malnutrition are worsening, allergy seasons are getting longer, and sometimes it's simply too hot for farmers to tend their crops.

Professor Dalby's suggestion? Not only should we restrict adverts for gas-guzzlers. We should treat climate change itself, not as an environmental problem, but as a health emergency.

* * * * *

The Rapid Transition Alliance is coordinated by the New Weather Institute, the STEPS Centre at the Institute of Development Stud-

ies, 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? Please send us a brief outline on info@climatenewsnetwork.net. Thank you.

Alex Kirby is a former BBC journalist and environment correspondent. He now works with universities, charities and international agencies to improve their media skills, and with journalists in the developing world keen to specialize in environmental reporting.

The Climate News Network is supported by the Ashden Trust, the JJ Charitable Trust and the Mark Leonard Trust – three of the Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts. We have also had generous support from the Lush Charity Pot. We thank them all for their practical help, and for sharing our vision. The site is open to everyone: this service is entirely free of charge and the stories are there for all to use.

Source: <https://climatenewsnetwork.net/ban-adverts-for-cars-that-damage-the-climate/>

Climate Emergency

Call of the Forest: Orphan Teaches World About Trees

Note from the Editor: *My friend Kim sent me this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBOVet8Ki4g&feature=youtu.be> and I was hooked. I love this woman. Kim then sent me Diana's latest book and I ordered the DVD of her documentary. Diana has the answer for us in how to halt climate change.*

“It will start with a shovel and an acorn, but we might just change the world.”

Director: Jeff McKay

Executive Producer: Merit Jensen Carr

Details: 85 minute / 52 minute / In English / Not Rated

Website: <https://calloftheforest.ca/about/synopsis-and-trailer/>

About Diana

Diana Beresford-Kroeger is a world recognized author, medical biochemist, and botanist. She has a unique combination of western scientific knowledge and the traditional concepts of the ancient world. Orphaned in Ireland in her youth, Beresford-Kroeger was educated by elders who instructed her in the Brehon knowledge of plants and nature.

About the Film

The science and enchantment of the global forest provides us with answers to modern dilemmas.

‘Call Of The Forest – The Forgotten Wisdom Of Trees’ is a documentary featuring scientist and acclaimed author Diana Beresford-Kroeger. The film follows Diana as she investigates our profound biological and spiritual connection to forests. Her global journey explores the science, folklore, and restoration challenges of this essential eco-system.

Beresford-Kroeger explores the most beautiful forests in the Northern Hemisphere from the sacred sugi and cedar forests of Japan to the great boreal forest of Canada. She shares the amazing stories behind the history and legacy of these ancient forests while also explaining the science of trees and the irreplaceable roles they play in protecting and feeding the planet.

Along the way we meet some of the world's foremost experts in reforestation. Dr. Akira Miyawaki, a worldwide specialist



Photo: <https://lh3.googleusercontent.com/u/0/d/0Bw73GvC4b122QnpucHJSbmt0clU=w1111-h957-iv2>
Diana Beresford-Kroeger sitting in the woods loving and being loved by trees and plants.

in the restoration of natural forest systems on degraded land, shows us how a native forest system can be planted even in the smallest street corner of Tokyo. Dr. Bill Libby, a pioneer in the field of forest tree genetics, tells us about the impacts of climate change on California's coast redwood and giant sequoia forests. Since 2002 Andrew St. Ledger, founder of The Woodland League in Ireland, has dedicated his life to restoring native woodlands in Ireland. We are introduced to the Anishinaabe people of Pimachiowin Aki who are working to have 33,400 square kilometers (20,754 square miles) of boreal forest in Canada recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Diana Beresford-Kroeger and I share a dream. We want people to see the forest and the trees, and the wildlife abounding in wild environments, in fine detail. We want native species to be valued and cultivated one by one for the special place they have in the deep history of the land.

E. O. Wilson, Harvard entomologist, conservationist and father of modern environmentalism: Trees provide food, create medicine, and most importantly,

provide life-giving oxygen. Without trees and their ability to capture carbon dioxide, our living breathable atmosphere would cease to exist on our planet. Trees are the most important living organisms on Earth, chemically affecting our environment more than anything else, and playing a vital role that sustains all life. Trees are literally the lifeline of the planet and the key to reversing climate change.

The ‘Call of the Forest’ film and movement is a call for massive, global reforestation to reverse climate change. If we could look back in time we would see forests blanketing the continents. But as human society has developed we have lost upwards of 95 percent of the world's forests and we continue to lose more than 140 square kilometres (87 square miles) of forest per day. Only 5% of the world's old growth native forests currently remain today.

‘Call of the Forest’ sounds the alarm by calling for immediate action on a global scale, but at its heart, it is a story of triumph, proposing a simple strategy for each of us to combat climate change by planting trees in

Forests *continued on next page*

Climate Emergency

Forests *continued from previous page*

our own yards and neighbourhoods.

Climate change is happening. What can we do about it? It will start with a shovel and an acorn, but we might just change the world.

Log Line

Take a walk in the woods with beloved Irish-Canadian scientist and author, Diana Beresford-Kroeger, as she reveals our profound human connection to the ancient and sacred northern forests and the essential role that they play in sustaining the health of our planet.

Synopsis

We cut down billions of trees every year. Today only five percent of the world's old growth forests remain intact. Yet trees are one of this planet's most significant creators of food, new medicines, and oxygen. Forests hold the answer to many of the world's problems – from climate change to human health and well-being.

Visionary scientist and acclaimed author Diana Beresford-Kroeger explores the science, folklore, and history of this essential eco-system reminding us that when we improve our profound human connection to woodlands we can, not only, restore our health – we can restore our planet.

From the sacred sugi and cedar forests of Japan, the ancient Raheen Wood of Ireland, and the walnut and redwood trees of America, to the great boreal forest of Canada, 'Call of the Forest' tells the amazing stories behind the history and legacy of these ancient forests.

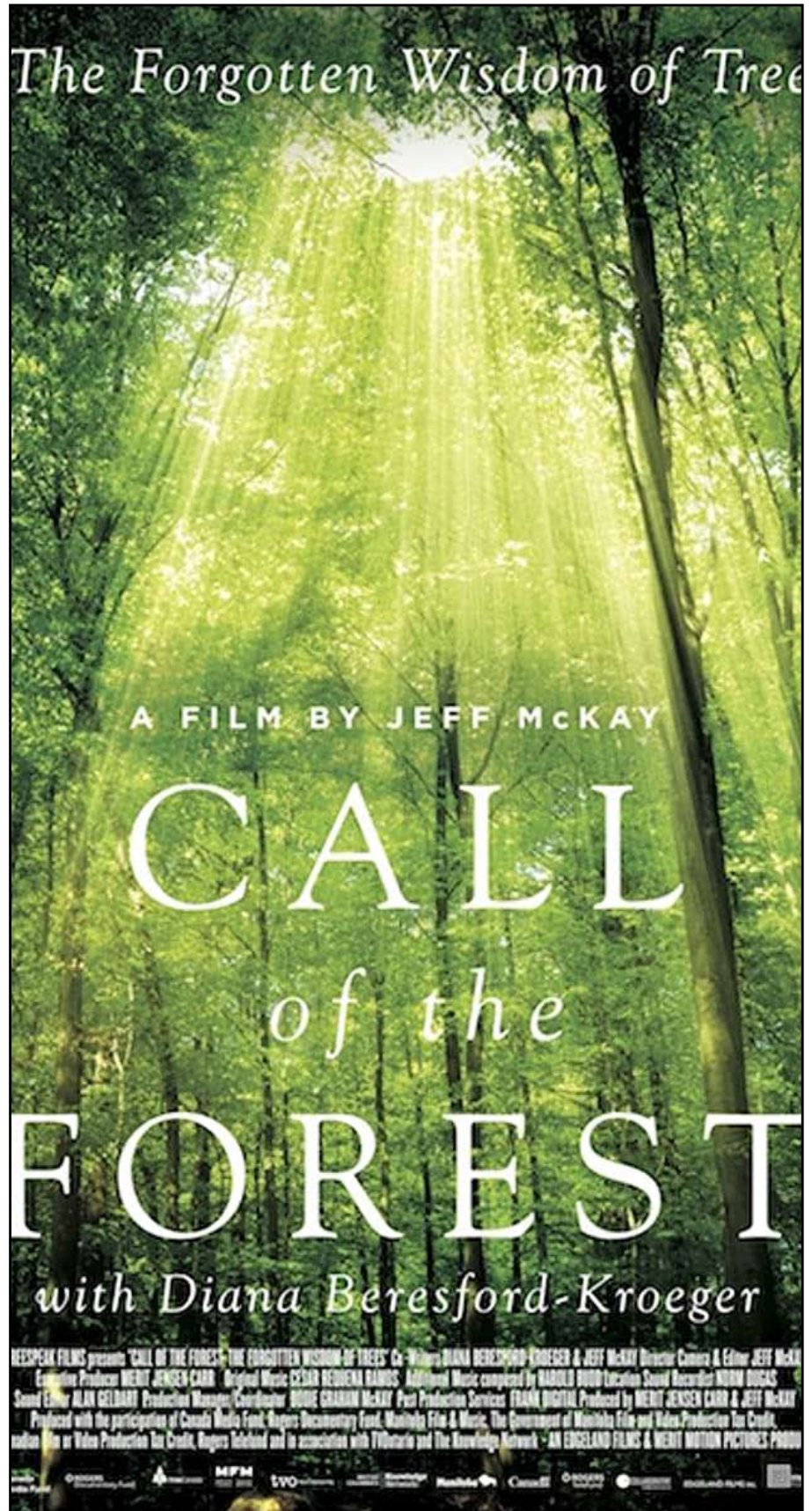
Andrew St. Ledger's work restoring the great forest of Aughty shows us all how old growth forests can be replanted and offers a glimpse into our cultural history with trees.

Woodlands are the beating heart of our ecosystem and Diana's call to action – to protect the native forests of the world and for every person to plant one tree a year for the next six years – provides us with a simple and powerful solution for climate change. As she travels across the globe to tell the story of the life and the science of the global forest, she presents us with a revolutionary conception of their value to all life and a message that could, literally, save mankind from itself.

**Message from the Director,
Jeff McCay**

My first 'encounter' with Diana Beresford-Kroeger was a radio interview I

Forests continued on next page



Climate Emergency

15 Youth Suing Mexican Government

Dear Friends,

We are excited to announce that 15 young Mexicans from the state of Baja California – who launched a climate lawsuit against the federal government of Mexico – have an early decision from the court to proceed to the merits before the Judiciary of the Federation of Mexico. They hope to be in court soon as the Judiciary reopens from the pandemic closures.

Jóvenes v. Gobierno de México, calls on the Mexican government to reduce or mitigate Mexico's contribution to global climate change and guarantee its people access to a healthy environment as established by their Constitution.

The youth plaintiffs in Jóvenes v. Gobierno de México, are represented by our talented partners at *Defensa Ambiental del Noroeste* (DAN) and supported by Our Children's Trust (OCT). You can learn more about this historic case at <https://www.ourchildrenstrust.org/mexico>.

The launch of this new case marks an important milestone: OCT now supports youth-led climate lawsuits that span all of North America – from *La Rose v. Her Majesty the Queen in Canada* to *Juliana v. United States* to *Jóvenes v. Gobierno de México*. The North American front of #youthgov is holding three of the top 10 greenhouse gas emitting nations accountable to their youngest citizens!

Mexico is currently experiencing a massive climate emergency putting food, health, and access to water at risk for millions of its citizens. Given the urgency of the crisis, the youth plaintiffs are demanding the Mexican government issue regulations and public policies in line with Mexico's General Law on Climate Change



Photo: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10164354478005106>

Seven of the 15 Jóvenes v. Gobierno de México plaintiffs from left: Fadya M., Daniela G., Naomi G., Leonardo T., Nelson G., Rafael M., Alexis R. Photo posted on Facebook by Elle Vander Schuur on September 2, 2020

and their constitutional rights.

We are committed to providing legal guidance and representation to brave young people and our partnering attorneys as they demand their rights to a stable climate in every country on our continent and around the world!

Your support is critical to our continued efforts in all of these cases. In this, our 10th anniversary year, we are privileged to have a \$60,000 matching challenge that we are \$17,500 shy of achieving. Please consider a donation to Our Children's

Trust today, to help us advance the North American front of youth climate litigation and these types of cases around the globe, and to secure science-based climate policy that will protect youth and future generations. You can donate to us at <https://app.moonclerk.com/pay/oss0mj405fu>.

Thank you for making it possible for us to help young people around the world stand up for their legal rights and hold their governments accountable!

The team at Our Children's Trust

Forests *continued from previous page*

happened upon while running errands one morning. I had never heard anyone speak about trees in that way. She shone a light on the environmental, medicinal, and cultural values found in each tree. I knew then that I had to make this film and that was the start of my five-year journey to create the film, 'Call Of The Forest: The Forgotten Wisdom Of Trees.'

This film represents my effort to make visible the invisible, by bringing you with me into the healing environment of a pine forest as it releases its medicinal aerosols, to share the complex science of a sacred ecosystem that feeds and protects the plan-

et, and to explore the history of our human community as it has grown in symbiosis with the forests that wreath our planet.

This film is my love letter to nature – it is my hope that this film will offer a sense of hope and a path forward for those of us who seek to protect and preserve our forests.

Diana Beresford-Kroeger's Bioplan is an ambitious plan encouraging ordinary people to develop a new relationship with nature, to join together to replant the global forest. Her books include *The Sweetness of a Simple Life*, *The Global Forest*, *Arboretum Borealis*, *Arboretum America*, *A Garden for Life*, and her latest one, *To Speak for the*

Trees: My Life's Journey from Ancient Celtic Wisdom to a Healing Vision of the Forest.

Diana Beresford-Kroeger was inducted as a Wings Worldquest fellow in 2010, she was elected as a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 2011. More recently, in 2016, the Society named her one of 25 women explorers of Canada. In addition, in 2011 she was named one of *Utne Reader's* World Visionaries.

Website: www.calloftheforest.ca

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CallofTheForest

Twitter: @DBKTrees

Instagram: @calloftheforestdbk

Earth Regeneration

Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA) urges like-minded organizations to intensify the fight against plastic pollution.

By Jussa Nhari Kudherezera, Zimbabwe

July was the Plastic Free month and this reminds us of the grim reality of the burden of plastic pollution not only here in Zimbabwe, but worldwide. Let everyday be a plastic free day.

Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA) posits that there is need for the country to step up its campaign to combat plastic pollution. The bulk of our litter in this country is plastic. Globally, plastic pollution is now one of the biggest environmental concerns facing us today, with plastic accounting for 10 percent of all of our waste. Our drains, water bodies, streets, highways, buildings, and every open space are clogged with plastics.

The country's major supply dams and rivers are full of plastic, which is seriously threatening the country's aquatic life. In Mutare, Sakubva River is full of plastic. Not only is plastic pollution threatening our biodiversity, but humans as well in terms of air and water pollution and also it becomes a health hazard. Production cost for our water has also risen due to the need to clear plastic waste.

Zimbabweans from all walks of life need to embrace everyday ways in which we can stop plastic pollution in our own communities.

The "I don't care" attitude will not take us anywhere. Stories abound of people throwing plastic litter anywhere and saying it's none of their business.

This attitude is destroying our environment. Commuter omnibus crews recklessly dispose tickets through windows, leaving everything to council cleaners. On the streets, people throw litter everywhere even if the bins are there. There is no sense of a shared responsibility to keep our environment clean.

#PlasticFree we call on governments, communities, and individuals to be united and reduce the amount of single-use plastics in our world. This fits seamlessly with our concerns here in Mutare to curb plastic pollution. In 2017, Zimbabwe took a positive step to ban kaylites (expanded polystyrene foam) due to public health concerns.

MAYA advocates that as a country, we need to take further action to ban plastic bags and packaging if we are serious about addressing the environmental and public health risks that go with plastic products.



Photo: Tendai Nyamadzi

MAYA member Tinashe Muzama is standing amidst a disastrous collection of trash, much of which he wants to see eliminated at its source. "As a country we need to come out with a battery of implementable measures to tackle this menacing plastic pollution," the author writes.

Much of our single-use plastic litter is non-biodegradable plastics and it can be present in our soils for up to a thousand years or more.

As residents, we are paying a heavy price for plastic pollution. The bulk of it escapes collection systems and ends up clogging the drains and polluting the environment. Plastic pollution is now seen as a major driver of respiratory and other non-communicable diseases.

Our streams, rivers, and oceans are under severe attack from plastic, which is destroying aquatic life and even our wildlife.

In Zimbabwe, there are numerous reports of animals that have died after consuming plastic. It is, therefore, important to understand the long-term implications of plastic pollution, not only in terms of its effect on marine and wildlife resources, but on major areas such as tourism and human health.

Keeping this in view, as a country we need to come out with a battery of implementable measures to tackle this menacing plastic pollution.

For instance, through an aggressive

"Plastic Free" campaign, Zimbabwe needs to invest more in plastic crushers to promote plastic recycling as a sustainable practice as well as a strategy to manage waste.

Crushed plastic bottles can be used for recycling in the manufacturing of items such as raw material for clothing, carpets, and grocery bags. In some countries such as India, crushed plastic is now being used to mend potholes on roads. Experts there say using plastic for constructing roads is cost effective and makes the roads durable and prevents recurring potholes.

Recycling plastic can empower local communities through various initiatives that enhance their livelihoods, while at the same time supporting local industries and cutting the country's huge import bill for plastic-related products.

MAYA embraces the Hash Tag #Plastic-Free. Zimbabweans from all walks of life need to play their part by adopting simple, everyday ways that can help the country to reduce plastic usage.

We need to promote the use of eco-

Plastic continued on next page

Earth Regeneration

Plastic *continued from previous page*

friendly bags to reduce the usage of plastic bags in daily life.

Zimbabwe needs to take gradual steps towards banning the use of plastic bags just like other countries such as Rwanda and Kenya have done.

Rwanda has shown us the way and the country has been plastic-bag-free since 2008. This central African country implemented a complete ban on plastic bags, while other countries around the world were just starting to impose taxes on plastic bags.

If Rwanda can do it, Zimbabwe can do it also. Other countries have banned plastics to fight the growing problem of plastic pollution.

Many are moving to ban plastic plates, cups, and utensils to help cut the usage of plastic through set targets.

Carrying your own shopping bags to the supermarket and avoiding the purchase of products in plastic packaging can be an important step in the fight against plastic pollution.

Zimbabwe needs to conduct extensive campaigns to raise awareness about plastic waste. People need to know both the immediate and long-term effects of plastic pollution.

MAYA reminds the nation that we have the power to stop plastic pollution. We only need to understand the gravity of plastic pollution both to our environment and human health. The environment of Zimbabwe is the most important treasure we have and we need to change our attitudes towards it and stop treating it recklessly.

It is our collective and individual responsibility to stand for our environment. A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. In the comfort of our homes let's reduce plastic waste.

MAYA therefore encourages residents to

follow the below steps as a means of reducing plastic waste on the environment:

1. Never leave any waste on the street, put it in a waste bin. If you cannot find one or if it is full, keep your waste with you until you find the next bin. If you put extra waste in a full waste bin, chances are the wind will blow it away. You can also simply take your waste home.

2. Biodegradable and compostable plastic does not belong in nature either. This type of plastic is only decomposed neatly in industrial compost plants, with the right proportions of moisture, heat, bacteria, and oxygen. This is not possible in the compost bin at home, let alone in the wild.

3. Cigarette filters consist of cellulose acetate, a kind of plastic. So don't just throw away your cigarette butts! In addition to plastic, the cigarette butts also contain many toxic substances such as nicotine, heavy metals, and other chemicals. Smokers worldwide buy 18 billion cigarettes a day. Two thirds of them are casually flung into the street or out a window. This is detrimental to our planet.

4. Avoid pre-packed fast food or dispose of the packaging in the waste bin.

5. Only put your waste bags on the street just before the waste truck arrives. This reduces the risk of the bag being damaged and the waste getting lost.

6. Clean up plastic waste if you find it.

7. Use reusable bags and pouches. Use a shopping bag and do not use the available plastic bags. Bring your own reusable bags to contain fruit and vegetables.

8. Avoid the use of plastic disposable material. Forks, knives, spoons, stirrers, and cotton buds ... shouldn't be made of plastic. Rather, use a reusable drinking bottle, for example made of glass. Avoid the use of disposable cups. Even paper cups are usually covered with a thin layer

of plastic. Prefer bringing your own cup. Use a glass at the bar or restaurant and bring your own drinking straw made of glass, steel, or bamboo.

9. Be careful with paint. Paint residues release microplastics into the environment. Therefore, do not rinse your paint brush under the tap, as the rinsing water belongs in the container park. Also collect the dust that is released when sanding off painted surfaces.

10. Let's not mix plastic waste with degradable waste at home for recycling purposes. Let's name our waste packs.

**LET'S TRY IT AND SAVE
THE ENVIRONMENT**

#NOISE PA ENVIRONMENT

#MAYA FOR ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

#TELL A FRIEND ABOUT MAYA

AND BRING A FRIEND TO MAYA

Story posted on Facebook August 10 at
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1040451169706395&id=599494193802097

Contact Jussa Kudherezera:

Email: manicayouthassembly@gmail.com

Phone: +263772351138



"Is There No End to Big Oil's Evil?" Campaigners Condemn Industry Plan to Pour U.S. Plastics Into Africa

Submitted by Bill Boteler, Maryland USA

By Jessica Corbett, *excerpt*
Common Dreams: August 31, 2020

Green groups responded with alarm to Sunday reporting by *The New York Times* and *Unearthed* that a U.S.-based trade group for major chemical and fossil fuel companies has lobbied the Trump administration during the Covid-19 pandemic to use a forthcoming trade agreement to flood the African continent with plastics.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Kenya Cabinet Secretary for Industrialization, Trade, and Enterprise Development Betty Maina launched trade negotiations in July. The new reports shed light on the lobbying efforts of the American Chemistry Council (ACC), whose members include the petrochemical operations of the oil giants Chevron, ExxonMobil, and Shell as well as chemical companies such as Dow and DuPont.

The ACC "is lobbying to influence Unit-

ed States trade negotiations with Kenya, one of Africa's biggest economies, to reverse its strict limits on plastics – including a tough plastic-bag ban. It is also pressing for Kenya to continue importing foreign plastic garbage, a practice it has pledged to limit," *The Times* reported....

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/08/31/there-no-end-big-oils-evil-campaigners-condemn-industry-plan-pour-us-plastics-africa>

Earth Regeneration

Victory: Safeguards Won for Cute, Ferocious Carnivore

Center for Biological Diversity: September 1, 2020

Humboldt Martens Receive Long-awaited Endangered Species Act Protection

PORTLAND, Oregon USA – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today that the Humboldt marten will receive protection as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The decision comes after two conservation groups sued the Trump administration for its long delay in finalizing protections for this rare species.

Humboldt martens are an elusive, cat-sized member of the weasel family. Once common in coastal forests in northern California and southern Oregon, the population was decimated by unchecked trapping and logging of its habitat. Today, fewer than 400 of these fascinating carnivores remain in four highly isolated fragments of the species' historic habitat.

"It's about time Humboldt martens got the protections they so desperately need," said Quinn Read, Oregon policy director of the Center for Biological Diversity. "We are perilously close to losing this incredible species forever. These protections provide a pathway to recovery, and we'll do everything we can to hold the Trump administration accountable to its responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act."

The protections announced this week come 10 years after the Center and the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) petitioned to list the Humboldt marten as a protected species under the Endangered Species Act. In its final determination, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recognized that Humboldt martens remain at grave risk from ongoing habitat loss and fragmentation due to unchecked logging and the increased frequency of wildfires.

"It is unfortunate that critical habitat for these rare forest denizens will be delayed. Protecting landscape connectivity and intact mature forests should be a priority," said Kimberly Baker, EPIC's public land advocate.

"It is especially frustrating knowing that a great amount of time and money has been spent on research, which has already determined vital habitat areas needed to help ensure their survival."



Humboldt marten.

Photo Courtesy Mark Linnell, U.S. Forest Service

Unfortunately, the Fish and Wildlife Service undercut some of the protections for Humboldt martens in today's designation by including an array of broad and vague exemptions for forest management activities. The Service also stopped short of designating critical habitat for the species, opting instead to conduct an economic analysis on an undetermined timeline.

Background

The Center and the EPIC petitioned to list the Humboldt marten as a protected species under the Endangered Species Act in 2010, but the Service caved to pressure from the timber industry and issued a negative decision in 2015. The groups successfully challenged that decision, and a federal judge ordered the agency to reevaluate the marten's status.

The Service subsequently announced its proposal to list the marten as a threatened species in October 2018. That decision triggered a deadline for a final listing by October 2019, but after failing to act, the Center and EPIC filed suit to require the agency to finalize protections.

Martens are threatened by the ongoing logging of mature forests, loss of closed-canopy habitat to wildfires, rodent poison used in marijuana cultivation, and vehicle strikes. California banned trapping of Humboldt martens in the 1940s, but Oregon did not follow suit until 2019 after a petition and lawsuit from conservation

groups. The animals have been wiped out from 93% of their historic range.

Martens have triangular ears and a bushy tail and are related to minks and otters. They grow up to 2 feet long but weigh less than 3 pounds and must eat a quarter of their body weight daily to keep up with their high metabolism. Martens eat small mammals, birds, berries, reptiles, and insects, and are eaten by larger mammals and raptors.

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1.7 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

The Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) advocates for the protection and restoration of Northwest California's forests, using an integrated, science-based approach, combining public education, citizen advocacy, and strategic litigation.

Contact: Quinn Read, Center for Biological Diversity, (206) 979-3074, QRead@biologicaldiversity.org

Kimberly Baker, Environmental Protection Information Center, (707) 822-7711, kimberly@wildcalifornia.org

Source: <https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/humboldt-martens-receive-long-awaited-endangered-species-act-protection-2020-09-01/>

Earth Regeneration



Photos: Thomson Reuters Foundation/Shuriah Niazi

Virus-idled workers dig water-retention trenches in Sagar district of India's Madhya Pradesh state as part of a government jobs program on August 27, 2020.

Virus-idled Indian Workers Dig Into a New Job: Boosting Water Security

By Shuriah Niazi
Thomson Reuters Foundation: September 4, 2020

Thousands of jobseekers have been recruited into a trench-building scheme aiming to boost scarce water supplies by catching rainfall.

SAGAR, India – Basant Ahirwar worked as an expert mason in India's northern Uttar Pradesh state before the country's coronavirus lockdown shut down business and forced him to return, jobless and largely on foot, to his home in central India's Madhya Pradesh state.

Now, however, he has found new work: Digging water capture pits into the hillsides of his drought-hit home district, a project aimed at restoring depleting aquifers

and providing an income to thousands of unemployed workers.

About 7,000 returning migrant workers and other unemployed people have been hired to do the work, with 50,000 pits dug since April on more than 40 hills around Sagar district, authorities said.

"This work has become a means of sustenance for us," said Ahirwar, who said he was being paid about 190 rupees (\$2.50) a day for the work – a third of what he used to get as a mason but welcome in a time when few other jobs are available.

He said rainwater was already collecting in the trenches and, "The hills, which were earlier barren, have now become lush and green," raising the prospect that farming in the district, slammed by drought, could become more successful again.

The work, which had been carried out earlier on a smaller scale, is being done under the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employ-

ment Guarantee Act, which aims to offer at least 100 days of paid employment a year per family in need of work.

Ichchhit Garhpale, the head of Sagar district's panchayat, or local council, said the effort aims to improve groundwater levels in the district.

As rainwater flows down the hills, it is trapped in the trenches, he said, and percolates slowly into the soil, rather than rushing away and causing erosion.

He said the pit system could help capture as much as 60 million liters of additional water in the course of a year.

Similar pits are planned on 20 to 25 more hills owned by the state government in the district, he said, as the project pushes ahead.

The work has come as a relief to thousands of migrant workers who rushed home in March after Indian Prime Minis-

Jobs continued on next page

Earth Regeneration

Jobs continued from previous page



A view of water-retention trenches dug by coronavirus-idled workers in Sagar district, in India's Madhya Pradesh state, as part of a government jobs program, August 27, 2020.

ter Narendra Modi declared a nationwide lockdown as cases of the coronavirus began rising.

The shutdown left millions without prospects for work – but efforts like that in Sagar have helped shore up families and raised the prospect that some may remain in their home districts.

‘Nothing Better’

Rohit Vishwakarma, who used to work in Nagpur, almost 400 kilometres (250 miles) from Sagar, said he saw the project providing better long-term prospects at home.

“The area faces acute drinking water shortages. One has to cover long distances to fetch water during the summer season.

The wells and hand-pumps run dry due to the fast-depleting groundwater,” he said.

“If we are able to solve the water problem, there is nothing better than that,” he said. And “if we continue to get this kind of work, we will not have to return to big cities to work.”

Sagar district sits in India’s Bundelkhand region, which is famous for its problems with drought. Erratic rain often leads to crop losses and joblessness, and the region struggles with other problems, from widespread illiteracy to inadequate healthcare.

Over the last decade, even normally erratic rains have been in decline, with the region seeing just half what is considered “normal” rainfall for the last six years, according to data from the India Meteorological

Department.

But local officials said the trench digging – with trees in some cases planted on the soil removed, and grass beginning to sprout as well – may help turn around a bad situation.

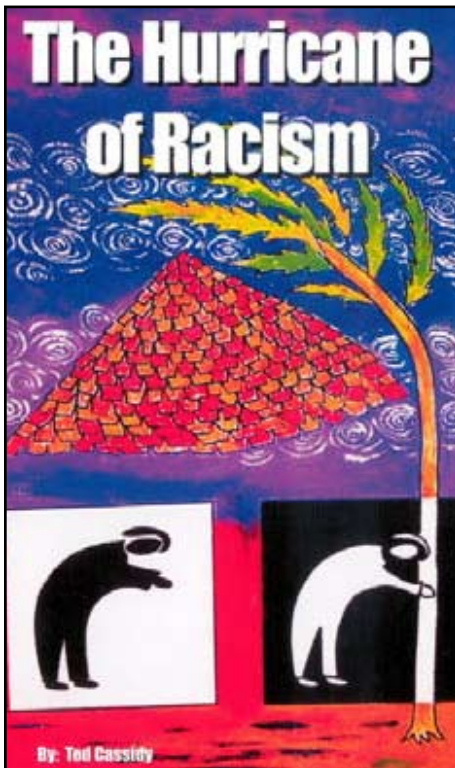
“Grass and plants grow on it naturally, and thus food becomes available for villagers’ cattle and grazing animals,” said Garhpale, head of the local council.

He said that water levels in wells in the area also had shown signs of rising as a result of the work, and that problems with flooding downstream when heavy rain falls had been reduced.

Source: <https://news.trust.org/item/20200904042000-w6h56/>

Ending Inequality

The Nature of Racism and How We Conquer It



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

Chapter 9 Admitting the Reality of the Denial of Racism

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; Chapter 6 in August 4, 2020; Chapter 7 in August 21, 2020; and Chapter 8 in September 6, 2020.

Have you seen the Spiderman movies? Peter Parker, who plays the part of Spiderman, is a timid and highly intelligent young man who has an extraordinary ability to leap amid skyscrapers by sending out webs at the speed of light. He uses this super human ability to care for all kinds of people in need. In the Marvel Comic Book series, as well as the films, he is tortured by a struggle to find his own identity. If he accepts this supernatural ability, will he be

able to fall in love? The film is a mini 12-Step program that he goes through to find out how to adjust to his gifts, his identity, and his place in society.

At the retreat center where I am chaplain, a number of retreats are reunions of those who are going through 12-Step programs for addictions. I have met some extraordinary people who are similar to a mature Spiderman. One particular woman told me she had been through many 12-Step programs in her life. Her husband is deceased, but she has recovered from this tragedy and many others by the way she has processed her life. She has been able to lead a number of retreats for widows and widowers. She and her team of widows spend hours together dreaming up creative ways to help others who have lost spouses. The person that my friend has become amazes and moves others. She is able to work with and for others in a way that creatively guides them to dialogue, ritual healing, and fun. Her personality is the secret to her ability to lead and guide others.

Father Clarence Williams has developed an 8-Step program to help a person become sober from racism. Twelve-step programs help people overcome addiction. Williams' 8-Step program helps people heal from the social pressure of racism.

This 8-step program is similar to a 12-Step program in that it leads one to be like my widow friend. It helps one be sober, that is free from the dysfunction of racism, much as the 12-Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous frees a person from the control of alcohol. Williams' steps are taken from Elizabeth Kubler Ross' analysis of the dying process – denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. To this, Father added three more steps: reengagement, forgiveness, and witness. These eight steps bring the sober, non-racist person to a freedom that engages with others in a positive way to help eliminate racism.

I encourage you to read Williams' book, *Racial Sobriety A Journey from Hurts to Healing*. (Institute for Recovery from Racisms, Detroit: IFRFR, 2002). I want to share some reflections with you on the first five steps. My objective is not to repeat what he says but to point out what I believe are some key areas that need consideration if

one is to understand the nature of racism.

Denial is a very deep part of the dysfunction of racism. In the meetings I have had with people trying to stop racism, denial has been a constant theme because people often ignore their feelings of concern for others, so an existing racist social system can stay in place. Black people tend to absorb the negative thinking that the social system puts on them. To really do something about racism means to rise above this thinking and to see what real human relationships can be.

I met an older Black woman who wanted to live in Haddonfield, New Jersey, but had to live in Camden because the taxes and property values in Haddonfield were too high. She paid \$800 in taxes for her Camden house. I told her that my sister and her husband were moving from a house in Garden City, New York, because the taxes were too high, about \$14,500 a year. This is an example of the discrepancy in the way Americans live. Is this directly racist? No. But this is part of the whole dysfunction of the way our society is set up in which racism is part.

Races living separately continue the psychosocial effect of denial. We avoid these matters in so much of our lives. We go on living without bringing them to consciousness. We give excuses for not getting engaged. "I'm too busy." "It is not my responsibility." "Everyone has to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps." "I can't do anything about this system. I am too busy to do anything." "I am comfortable with my neighborhood. If I said anything to my friends or neighbors they would either ignore me or get angry." "I would not be accepted if I would become an activist. It is too uncomfortable to bring up these controversial topics." "My friends and I don't ever talk about racism. We don't know how to talk about it."

All of these statements lead to the conclusion that we live in a denial of racism. This of course doesn't apply to everyone. It is a psychosocial state that oozes out of control that prevents us from dealing with this horrible dysfunction. When we are in denial, we let incorrect opinions and adolescent behavior take over our way of

Racism continued on next page

Ending Inequality

Gates 'Failing Green Revolution in Africa'

By Stacy Malkan

Ecologist: Journal for the Post-Industrialist Age

August 14, 2020

Billions of dollars spent promoting and subsidizing commercial seeds and agrichemicals across Africa have failed to fulfill their promises to alleviate hunger and lift small-scale farmers out of poverty, according to a new white paper published by the Tufts University Global Development and Environment Institute (GDEI).

African and German civil society organizations produced a report based on the research, "False Promises," calling on governments to stop funding and subsidizing the so-called "green revolution" and shift support to programs that help small-scale food producers, particularly women and youth, develop climate-resilient ecologically-sustainable farming practices.

The research examines the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), a nonprofit launched by the Bill & Melinda Gates and Rockefeller foundations in 2006 with promises to double yields and incomes for 30 million farming households while cutting food insecurity in half in 20 African countries by 2020.

Failures

The effort has fallen far short of those goals, according to the new research led by Timothy A. Wise, former director of the Tufts GDEI program and now a senior advisor at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

In 14 years, AGRA has collected nearly a billion dollars in donations and disbursed \$524 million, primarily in 13 African countries, promoting the use of commercial seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides – a technology package further supported by about \$1 billion per year in subsidies from African national governments.

According to the Gates Foundation, AGRA's largest funder, these investments are "the surest path to reducing poverty and hunger in Africa." But AGRA has provided no evaluation or comprehensive reporting to support that claim. To evaluate progress, the Tufts researchers relied on



Photo: Flickr Global Justice Now CC BY 2.0

Green revolution is locking African farmers into a system that is not designed for their benefit, but for Northern multinational corporations.

national-level data for agricultural productivity, poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.

The researchers found "little evidence of widespread progress on any of AGRA's goals, which is striking given the high levels of government subsidies for technology adoption." The paper documents slow productivity growth, no significant increases in food security or small-farmer incomes, and worsening hunger in most of AGRA's target countries.

Wise said, "It's a failing model, failing results; it's time to change course."

Evaluation

AGRA disagreed with the analysis, claiming in a statement that the research failed to meet "basic academic and professional standards of peer review and asking the subject to comment on the 'findings.'" AGRA accused Wise of having "a history of writing unfounded allegations and uncorroborated reports about AGRA and its work."

In an email, Andrew Cox, chief of staff and strategy at AGRA, criticized the researcher as "not professional and ethical" and said they "prefer to have transparency and engagement with reporters and others

directly around the issues." He said that AGRA "will do a full evaluation against its targets and results" at the end of 2021.

Wise, whose 2019 book *Eating Tomorrow* was critical of aid that pushes high-input agricultural models in Africa, said he contacted AGRA repeatedly with requests for their monitoring and evaluation data. The organization said it would provide the information but ceased responding to requests. Wise said, "If AGRA or the Gates Foundation has data that contradicts these findings, they should make them available."

The Gates Foundation responded to the Tufts paper with a statement from its media team, "We support organizations like AGRA because they partner with countries to help them implement the priorities and policies contained in their national agricultural development strategies. "We also support AGRA's efforts to monitor progress continually and collect data to inform what's working and what's not working. We encourage you to look to AGRA's newly released annual report for the latest data on its goals and impact. "

Gates continued on next page

Racism *continued from previous page*

thinking and acting.

To work against racism is to be like my widow friend who has processed her life and is leading others to recognize what is

wholesome. Her 12-Step programs have helped her to become someone who has differentiated herself from dysfunctional systems. As a result they cannot control her.

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

Ending Inequality

Gates continued from previous page

Hunger

The Tufts paper concluded, “The evidence suggests that AGRA is failing on its own terms. Its model of high-input agriculture is failing to reach large numbers of smallholder farmers. When it does reach farmers it is failing to significantly increase their productivity, and incomes are not increasing in a way that would reduce poverty and food insecurity.”

Among the key findings of the Tufts paper was that the number of hungry people in AGRA’s 13 focus countries has jumped 30 percent during the AGRA years, despite the massive investments in agricultural productivity gains.

Productivity increased just 29 percent over 12 years for maize, the most subsidized and supported crop – far short of the goal of a 100% increase. Many climate-resilient, nutritious crops have been displaced by the expansion in supported crops such as maize.

Even where maize production has increased, incomes and food security have scarcely improved for AGRA’s supposed beneficiaries: small-scale farming households.

Although AGRA’s programs have long been pitched as an effort to boost the incomes of small farmers and a key focus of the Gates Foundation is advancing the economic power of women, researchers found no evidence AGRA is reaching a significant number of smallholder farmers or women. While some medium-sized farms may see productivity improvements, “those are overwhelmingly farmers – mostly men – with access to land, resources, and markets,” the report said.

Devastating

Jan Urhahn, agricultural expert at the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, which funded the research, said, “The results of the study are devastating for AGRA and the prophets of the Green Revolution.” He added, “We are interested in having an evidence-based debate with policy makers about the approach taken by AGRA. We see no reason to focus, as AGRA does, on individuals and ‘personalize’ the arguments. With our study we have taken a very comprehensive and holistic approach and, in addition to data analysis, have carried out country research and spoken to small-scale food producers among others. The results confirmed all our doubts.”

Muketoi Wamunyima, country coordinator for PELUM Zambia, said the findings bolster his group’s longstanding “fears

and apprehension about AGRA in Africa.” He said AGRA is not an African organization, although it presents itself as such.

Wamunyima said, “As civil society organizations working in Zambia, we have challenged AGRA’s model and engaged with our local government to highlight the fact that AGRA’s approach does not respond to the needs of the small-scale food producers.”

Small-scale food producers are increasingly going into poverty while adopting AGRA solutions such as the Farmer Input Support Program. AGRA should have responded to the study by providing evidence that says otherwise.”

Diet

Rwanda is widely touted as the success story of AGRA, with a 66 percent growth in maize yields since 2006 and an increase in daily per capita calorie production. The country is on track to become self-sufficient in its supply of hybrid maize seeds thanks to the partnership between AGRA and the government, according to AGRA.

These achievements helped elevate Rwanda’s former Agriculture Minister, Agnes Kalibata, to the presidency of AGRA in 2014 and to an appointment as Special Envoy of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit.

Wise explained that Rwanda is “a striking story. They tripled maize production.” However, his research found weak overall productivity improvements across staple crops in Rwanda as farmers abandoned more nutritious local crops to grow maize. Meanwhile, according to the latest figures just released by the UN, the number of undernourished people in Rwanda grew by 41 percent in the AGRA years.

Wise said, “Rwanda is a clear indictment of the AGRA model.” Malaysian economist Jomo Kwame Sundaram, a former assistant director general of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, shared a similar viewpoint in IPS News, saying that the AGRA model is “replacing hunger with malnutrition.”

Sundaram continued, “As most farmers cannot afford AGRA’s expensive recommended commercial seeds and fertilizers, African Governments subsidize them at the cost of about a billion dollars annually.” The subsidies have mainly promoted “starchy” crops such as maize and rice which have been replacing “more climate-resilient, nutritious crops such as sweet potato and millet.”

Variety

The AGRA package, he notes, has been “imposed with a heavy hand,” with the Rwandan Government even “reportedly banning cultivation of some staple crops in some areas.” Although opposition from Rwandan farmers forced the government to relax some crop restrictions and allow more diversity, maize and other commodity crops remain heavily subsidized and supported.

Sundaram wrote, “The AGRA model imposed on previously relatively diverse Rwanda farming almost certainly undermined its more nutritious and sustainable traditional agricultural cropping patterns.” He said “hidden hunger” involving micronutrient deficiencies “is best addressed by dietary diversity, supported by crop diversity in farming, rather than the Green Revolution’s exclusive focus on raising caloric intake.”

AGRA’s Kalibata sees it differently: “The bottom line is, people need to meet their caloric needs,” she said in a July discussion about Covid-19 and the hunger crisis. Until their caloric needs are met, Kalibata said, “it’s a luxury” for starving people to think about dietary diversity.

The debate over the merits of starchy commodity crops and calories versus more nutrition-diverse and locally-controlled cropping systems is headed for a showdown at the UN World Food Summit in 2021.

Hundreds of groups are on record opposing Kalibata’s appointment. In a letter to the UN Secretary-General, 174 civil society organizations and farmer groups from 83 countries called for the appointment to be revoked. Given AGRA’s history, they said, it will “result in another forum that advances the interests of agribusiness at the expense of farmers and our planet.”

Summit

They described AGRA’s approach as a “finance-intensive and high-input agricultural model” that is “not sustainable beyond constant subsidy” and is “capturing and diverting public resources to benefit large corporate interests.”

A group of 500 civil society organizations, academics, and social movements also urged the UN to reconsider the appointment. Family farmers who produce more than 80 percent of the world’s food should be at the center of the Summit, they said.

The appointment also drew support, with a letter signed by 12 individuals, including leaders from the World Bank, Af-

Gates continued on next page

Ending Inequality

Gates continued from previous page

rican Development Bank and the African Agricultural Technology Foundation, reaffirming their faith in Kalibata as a global leader and praising her leadership style, and writing, “She is a respected member of a new generation of African professionals who are shaping the future of the African development agenda.”

According to an analysis by AGRA Watch, a Seattle-based organization working for global food sovereignty, all but one of the signers of the support letter has received funds from the Gates Foundation. The group referred to Bill Gates as the “man behind the curtain” influencing the UN Food Summit.

Justice

AGRA’s lack of progress toward improving conditions of poverty and hunger is no surprise to Africa-based farming and food sovereignty groups who have opposed the “neocolonial logic” of the Gates Foundation’s Green Revolution from the start.

Mariam Mayet, executive director of the African Centre for Biodiversity, said, “For years we have documented the efforts to spread the Green Revolution in Africa, and the dead-ends it will lead to – declining soil health, loss of agricultural biodiversity, loss of farmer sovereignty, and locking of African farmers into a system that is not designed for their benefit, but for the profits of mostly Northern multinational corporations.”

The South Africa-based research and advocacy organization has published more than two-dozen papers since 2007 warning about the AGRA model. Mayet said, “Africans don’t need unaccountable American and European agrichemical and seed companies to develop them. We need global trade, financial and debt justice to re-cast Africa’s position in the global economy and that gives us the space to democratically build our future.”

In the context of the Covid crisis especially, she said, “This new report strengthens the argument that Africa is better off without AGRA and its neocolonial logic, and that solutions lie with people on the continent and the world that are building systems grounded in justice, and human and ecological wellbeing.”

Million Belay, who coordinates the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), a coalition of 30 Africa-based food and farming groups, equated the current market-driven agricultural development model to a “knee on the neck of Africa.”

Colonialism

In a powerful essay in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the global uprising for racial justice, Belay discussed a false narrative about African food systems seeded by philanthro-capitalists, aid agencies, governments, and others who “talk about transforming African agriculture when what they are doing is creating a market for themselves cleverly couched in a nice sounding language.”

Belay wrote, “We are told that our seeds are old and have little capacity to give us food and they have to be hybridized and genetically modified to be of use; we are told that what we need is more calories and we need to focus on seeds of few crops; we are told that we are not using our land effectively and it should be given to those who can do a better job of it; we are told that our knowledge about farming is backward and we need to modernize with knowledge from the West ... we are told we need business to invest billions of dollars, and without these saviors from the North, we cannot feed ourselves...”

It is the same knee that justified colonialism in Africa. I think the only way to remove this knee and breathe is to recognize the knee, understand its ways of working, and organize to defend ourselves.”

Belay’s group and many others including the international peasant movement *La Via Campesina*, a coalition of 164 organizations in 73 countries, point to agroecology as the solution. AFSA documents a number of case studies documenting “how agroecology benefits Africa in terms of food security, nutrition, poverty reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation, cultural sensitivity, democracy, and value for money.”

The Tufts paper also notes a growing body of research showing the limits of the input-intensive green revolution model and the viability of agroecological approaches.

Messaging

In another report released last week, AGRA Watch dissected the “messaging of the Gates agenda” with a case study on the Cornell Alliance for Science and its efforts to discredit agroecology. Funded mostly by the Gates Foundation and housed at Cornell University, the Alliance for Science is a public relations campaign that promotes GMOs and pesticides around the world, with a focus on Africa.

A recent Cornell Alliance for Sci-

ence post gives a sense of the messaging: agroecology “risks harming the poor and worsening gender inequality in Africa,” according to the article by Mark Lynas.

His post was widely panned by academics who said it was a “flawed analysis” and a “non-scientific interpretation of a scientific paper” that “erroneously conflates conservation ag with agroecology and then makes wild conclusions.”

The agronomist Marc Corbeels, whose paper Lynas purported to describe in the article, said the analysis made “sweeping generalizations” of his work. Marcus Taylor, a political ecologist at Queen’s University in Canada, described it as “pure ideology” and called for a retraction.

AGRA’s Andrew Cox promoted the Lynas article as a “great piece ... looking at the tension between emerging thinking on agroecology and the need for the right use of biotechnology, hybrid seeds, mechanization, irrigation, and other tools to transform the lives of smallholder farmers.”

AGRA “believes that African farmers must have at least the same opportunities as others, and have the benefit of African solutions for African problems,” Cox said.

Promises

One year ago, the bold promises of AGRA – to double yields and incomes for 30 million farming households in Africa by 2020 – appeared prominently on the organization’s grants page. The goals have since disappeared from the page. When asked about this, AGRA’s Andrew Cox clarified, “We have not reduced our ambition, but have learned that other more targeted indicators are appropriate.”

He said AGRA recently updated its website and “didn’t have the resources to get it done in the way that we wanted” but will be updating it again soon.

AGRA indicated a shift in its thinking on metrics. The group said in its statement responding to critics, “Over the last 14 years, AGRA has achieved its successes, but has also learned a lot. The task of catalyzing transformation is difficult and needs exceptional commitment, structural change, and investment....AGRA will continue to refine its approach based on the needs of our partner farmers, SMEs [small and mid-size enterprises] and the priorities of governments.”

Cox further elaborated in his email: “AGRA has a basket of indicators to track results across farmers, systems, and govern-

Gates continued on next page

Ending Inequality

Sign of the Times: Mumbai Green Lights Women Figures on Traffic Signals

By Roli Srivastava, *excerpt*

Thomson Reuters Foundation: August 3, 2020

MUMBAI, India – Mumbai has become the first Indian city to introduce female figures on its traffic lights, a move welcomed by women's rights campaigners as a step towards greater inclusivity.

Authorities are swapping the green and red male stick figures on more than 100 pedestrian crossings to female figures as part of a broader plan to make roads more pedestrian-friendly.

"The signage reflects the character of the city ... that it believes in gender equality and promotes women's empowerment," said Kiran Dighavkar, assistant commissioner with Mumbai's municipal corporation. "This is just the start," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

India's financial capital has for some time operated women's coaches on suburban trains and reserved seating on buses and is widely regarded as one of the country's safest cities for women.

Women's rights campaigners said the change may appear small but was significant. In many Indian cities, women make up only a small proportion of the people on the streets.

"If a generation of little girls grow up



Photo: yourstory.com/herstory

The initiative is part of a larger citywide project called Mumbai Culture Spine, which has installed 240 pedestrian signals, replacing male stick figures.

seeing women figures on the traffic signals, it sends a small but powerful signal that women belong in the public," said social scientist Shilpa Phadke.

"The presence of such symbolism in the public might undo the idea that the imagined person on the street is male ... this is symbolically valuable in the long run," said Phadke, co-author of "Why Loiter?"

Women and Risk on Mumbai Streets..."

Delhi last year announced free public transport for women to boost their mobility and several Indian states give out free bicycles to girls to ensure they do not drop out of schools for lack of safe or accessible public transport. . . .

Source: <https://news.trust.org/item/20200803140101-96vvc/>

Gates *continued from previous page*

ments. AGRA has been able to demonstrate that on a household by household basis, incomes do sharply increase when farmers are given access to modern seeds and inputs, supported by village level extension."

However, he said, a number of other factors affect incomes that are beyond AGRA's influence and AGRA's thinking on farmer incomes has "moved to being more context specific and related to what we can influence directly." More information will be forthcoming next year at the end of the strategic session when AGRA will publish a full evaluation.

Communications

In the meantime, AGRA is ramping up its PR efforts. A request for proposal for a three-year communications consultancy, posted in June, describes ambitions to "increase AGRA's positive media coverage by about 35-50 percent above the 2017 coverage." A trends report notes that AGRA received 80 media mentions a month in 2016 with an uptick to 800 articles in September of that year.

The proposal notes two key moments each September that drive media attention. The African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF), billed as the largest agriculture and food systems event in Africa; and the Africa Food Prize, a partnership with Yara International fertilizer company, the Ecomet Foundation and Corteva AgriScience (formerly DowDuPont).

The selected PR consultant will be responsible for handling media at the events and developing talking points for all "high level AGRF (African Green Revolution Forum) speakers." The scope of work also includes obtaining "at least 10 high quality editorials" placed in "influential traditional and emerging global and regional outlets like *The New York Times*, *Ventures Africa*, *The Africa Report*, *CNBC-Africa*, *Al Jazeera*, etc.," and securing "25-30 prime time one-on-one interviews for AGRA experts in major global media."

In a webinar last weekend hosted by AGRA Watch, Raj Patel, author of *Stuffed*

and Starved, noted that "the production of knowledge" is a key aspect of how modern colonialism works. "Power needs to maintain hegemony and dominate in the field of ideas as well as in dominance of the land," he said.

Mariam Mayet of the African Centre for Biodiversity sees the aggressive PR efforts as "more evidence of desperation. They just cannot get it right on the Continent, at least in terms of [genetic modification]." Efforts by green revolution supporters to discredit the work of African groups and food sovereignty movements "border on defamation at this point," she said. "Why don't you engage in a fair fight with us?"

Stacy Malkan is co-founder of *U.S. Right to Know*, a research group focused on the food industry. She is author of, *Not Just a Pretty Face: The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry* (*New Society*, 2007). Follow her on Twitter at @StacyMalkan.

Source: <https://theecologist.org/2020/aug/14/gates-failing-green-revolution-africa>

Ending Inequality



Photos: Thomson Reuters Foundation/Handout by ActionAid

Talat Jahan, a domestic abuse survivor, sits in her tuk-tuk in Bhopal, India.

Tuk-tuk Warriors: Abuse Victims Who Rode to Women's Rescue in Lockdown India

By Annie Banerji
Thomson Reuters Foundation: September 3, 2020

NEW DELHI, India – As the coronavirus kept virtually everyone at home, Talat Jahan was busily crisscrossing the slums in her black-and-yellow rickshaw – on a lockdown mission to help women suffering abuse and hunger in her central Indian city.

Jahan, 29, a domestic abuse survivor, and about a dozen other women who recently trained to become Bhopal's first female rickshaw drivers, ferried food and other essentials to hard-hit city families during India's months-long lockdown.

But often, Jahan said, she and her fellow volunteers from the Gauravi one-stop crisis center were simply a sympathetic ear for women cooped up with their abusers during the Covid-19 lockdown, which led to a spike in domestic violence worldwide.

"Some women who were stuck at home with their abusive husbands, they would

come and seek me out and tell me about their troubles," said Jahan, who suffered violence and demands for a dowry from her in-laws.

Bhopal's charity-run Gauravi was the first such center set up after the gang rape and murder of a woman on board a Delhi bus in 2012, a crime that sparked global outrage over women's treatment and led to tougher anti-rape laws in India.

Gauravi, which means "brave heart" in Hindi, gives abuse victims legal, financial, social, and psychological support.

It also helped Jahan and the other women rickshaw drivers – many of whom are survivors of domestic violence – find a new profession, as well as a way to assist other women in need.

"I felt blessed to be able to help these women because I had been through the same and knew what it is like, this feeling of helplessness," Jahan told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone from Bho-

pal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh state. "When one of them said to me 'Had it not been for you, I would have died,' I knew I was doing something right."

As countries across the world reported a surge in calls to domestic violence hotlines, India's federal and state governments set up a dedicated helpline for women during the coronavirus restrictions.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) also launched a WhatsApp helpline in April, according to the women's ministry.

The NCW registered 660 complaints of domestic violence in July, up about 45% from the previous month. During the strict lockdown between late March and June, the commission's helpline logged some 1,500 complaints.

Neither the women's ministry nor the NCW responded to requests for comment.

Women continued on next page

Ending Inequality

Women *continued from previous page*



Talat Jahan, a domestic abuse survivor, drives her tuk-tuk in Bhopal, India.

‘Healing Touch’

Sarika Sinha, a director at ActionAid India who manages Gauravi, said the women tuk-tuk drivers played a key role in identifying and ensuring support to domestic abuse victims. “It’s a difficult time. You lose your livelihood, you lose your food, you lose your security,” she said.

“So, where do these most vulnerable women go? That’s the larger picture that needs to be seen against the Covid-19 pandemic.”

She said the center received 1,400 distress calls from women during the lockdown, ranging from domestic abuse, marital rape, and trafficking cases to pregnant women unable to access healthcare and abortion services.

In cases involving domestic violence, counsellors would talk to the couple over the phone. If that failed, they would meet the husband at the couple’s home or at Gauravi before approaching the police for help.

“If husbands didn’t mend their ways, we would keep the women and their young children at our shelter,” said Neelima Jatav, 26, who joined Gauravi as a staff worker after enduring domestic abuse, divorce, and a miscarriage.

While there were many challenges – not least securing travel permits to reach distressed women – one of the biggest was

social distancing, Sinha said. “Earlier we would hug women, hold them, wipe their tears to comfort them during a difficult time,” she said. “A healing touch – that was what was most needed during Covid-19 – and that totally got lost.”

There is no quick end in sight to the outbreak in India as coronavirus cases soar in the world’s second most-populous nation, reaching 3.69 million this week as the country repeatedly reports the highest global single-day caseloads.

Despite the surge in infections, restrictions are being eased as authorities seek to revive the economy.

‘Not Enough’

The United Nations has called domestic violence a “shadow pandemic,” predicting that lockdowns could lead to a 20% surge in abuse.

To prevent such an outcome, the women at Gauravi decided to find vulnerable people, list their needs, pack kits of food and vital aid, and use their tuk-tuks to deliver nearly 10,000 of them over the three months.

They also drove women to work, helped them call government ambulances, and raised awareness about Covid-19 when public transport – including tuk-tuks – came to a halt, depriving the women

drivers of the daily income of up to 1,500 rupees (\$20).

Pranita Achyut, a director at the International Center for Research on Women in Asia, welcomed such projects, but said India had a long way to go in adequately supporting and rehabilitating women trying to flee abuse. “Unless we take violence as a systemic, structural issue, small bits and pieces – while they are important and necessary – will not be enough,” she said. She called for a range of actions, including reforming India’s creaking criminal justice system to ensure more domestic abuse cases reach court and make it more sensitive to the mental health problems suffered by many victims.

In the meantime, Jahan said she was happy with her newly-acquired driving skill, which she credits for a boost in her confidence – something she lacked in the past. “I was very nervous at first... and people made fun of me, too. But I carried on regardless. They slowly understood I was not going to back down,” she said, adding that she now felt ready to learn how to drive a bus, and then fly a plane. “I’ve never been on one, but it has been my childhood dream to fly one.”

(\$1 = 74.3275 Indian rupees)

Source: <https://news.trust.org/item/20200903093424-hxtt6/>

Ending Inequality



Photos: Thomson Reuters Foundation/Malaicka Adihe

Lauren Muntu Kintadi, founder of the Union of Compassionate Hearts charity, poses for a photo with an all-female masonry team on their work site in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, on August 19, 2020.

Congolese Abuse Survivors Rebuild Lives, Brick by Brick

By Malaicka Adihe
Thomson Reuters Foundation: September 4, 2020

Women and girls in war-torn DRC are being trained as builders as part of a scheme to help them find work.

GOMA, Congo – Congolese teenager Aline was left destitute aged only 15 after she was raped, left pregnant, and then accused of bringing dishonor to her family and made to leave her home. But just two years later, her life is back on track, thanks to a groundbreaking scheme to teach building skills to survivors of sexual violence in a region ravaged by years of ethnic conflict

that have hit women particularly hard.

The scheme is the brainchild of Lauren Muntu Kintadi, 36, who wanted to help single mothers and other women in need to find paid work, and realized there was a demand for building.

Aline joined the program after finding help from an organization on the outskirts of Goma, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo's restive North Kivu region, that supports rape victims and young mothers. "This training is going to help me in the future, especially in looking after my baby," said Aline, whose real name the Thomson Reuters Foundation is withholding.

"My aim is to find a job after the training. I know this can help me and my baby," she said as she worked on a project

to decorate a private home in Goma, her young daughter playing a few meters away.

About a dozen women are being trained to lay bricks, landscape gardens, and do basic home renovations in Goma. The work is usually done by men, but demand for the women's services is strong in the city, thanks in part to a social media push that Muntu said had sparked people's curiosity.

Many of the women are victims of sexual and domestic violence, others simply desperate for work in a country where employers often discriminate against women in general – and mothers in particular.

Cases of domestic violence rose dramatically following the lockdown imposed at the start of the corona virus pandemic in

Builders continued on next page

Ending Inequality

Builders *continued from previous page*



A masonry apprentice gives water to her daughter on her work site in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, on August 19, 2020.

March, according to women's rights activists.

Anny T Modi, who heads local charity Afia Mama, said incidences had increased by about 35% as men stayed home during the day.

"What they see in this initiative is the chance to reintegrate into society after being humiliated and rejected by their community," said Muntu, 36, who set up the Union of Compassionate Hearts charity in 2018.

Fighting Stereotypes

Sexual violence against women and girls in Congo is widespread, according to the United Nations, which says more than half have suffered from domestic violence or marital rape. Rape has also been widely documented as a weapon of war in eastern Congo, which remains largely controlled

by militia groups since the end of a 1998-2003 war in which foreign armies and rebels vied for control over mineral resources.

The central African nation was ranked amongst the 10 most dangerous countries to be a woman by a Thomson Reuters Foundation poll in 2018.

Survivors are often put off reporting crimes because it is a complex process and because of the stigma attached, and human rights activists say justice is rare.

In some cases, hospitals refuse admittance without a police order, or demand money to carry out a rape examination, said Christelle Vuanga, president of the national human rights commission. "The way victims (of sexual violence) are treated is confusing. There are no policies that support (them)," she said.

"Women endure gender-based violence

on a daily basis. Social rules and norms make them a little weaker every day," said Muntu, who wants to develop more training for vulnerable girls and women.

Muntu has agreed to work with the Congolese National Institute for Professional Preparation, which provides technical and vocational training for adults, and is getting more and more offers of work.

"I've always had a weakness for the jobs that society considers to be only for men, but it was mainly a question of capitalizing on an opportunity," she said. "This gives us easy access to the jobs market and above all it helps us to fight stereotypes and all kinds of discrimination against women, the kind that sees women as weak."

Source: <https://news.trust.org/item/20200904083516-lsbbb/>

THE BEGINNING IS ALWAYS TODAY.

- Mary Wollstonecraft -

<https://quotes.yourdictionary.com/author/mary-wollstonecraft/625481>

Human Interest



Photo: TheHumanitarianWatch.org

Women are being trained on starting their own businesses, how to survive the pandemic, and how to work against gender-based violence in their communities.

Groups Work Together to Empower Women in Cameroon

Submitted by Ngo Banfogha
H4BF Cameroon

Donga Matung: H4BF, UNDP, & Global Aid for Africa Train, Empower Women On How To Survive Pandemics

By Njodzefe Nestor

The Humanitarian Watch: August 31, 2020

Apart from serious implications on the health of the population of Donga Mantung Division in the NW region of Cameroon, Covid-19 has significantly impacted businesses and the economy with a greater toll on women.

It is within this backdrop that Hope for A Better Future (H4BF) in partnership with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Global Aid For Africa has kick-started a project that aims to build the capacity of women to survive

the crisis and pandemics via the use of Microenterprise developments as a tool to reduce Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

This has been through identification and training of representatives of women's groups on how to start up and run a business while solving community issues like creating community awareness on pandemics like Covid-19, identifying and reporting cases of Gender Based Violence via existing referral pathways, among others.

The representatives are expected to replicate the training to their respective groups of over 300 women in 5 towns of Donga Mantung division (Nkambe, Ndu, Misaje, Nwa, and Ako).

The representatives were trained in the different towns last week on different modules by different experts on entrepreneurship, business finance management skills, microfinance, marketing (group-to-groups sales), knowledge on GBV, and how to report cases of GBV and knowledge on Covid-19. They also received psychosocial

support.

The project seeks to promote the socio-economic empowerment of women residents in the division by giving startup capital to 30 women groups (6 per town of the 5 towns) women each in the 5 towns to open businesses that are expected to recruit more women.

It is focused on using a Community-based approach to reduce morbidity and mortality of corona virus and other pandemics in Donga Mantung through awareness creation using community-based response teams.

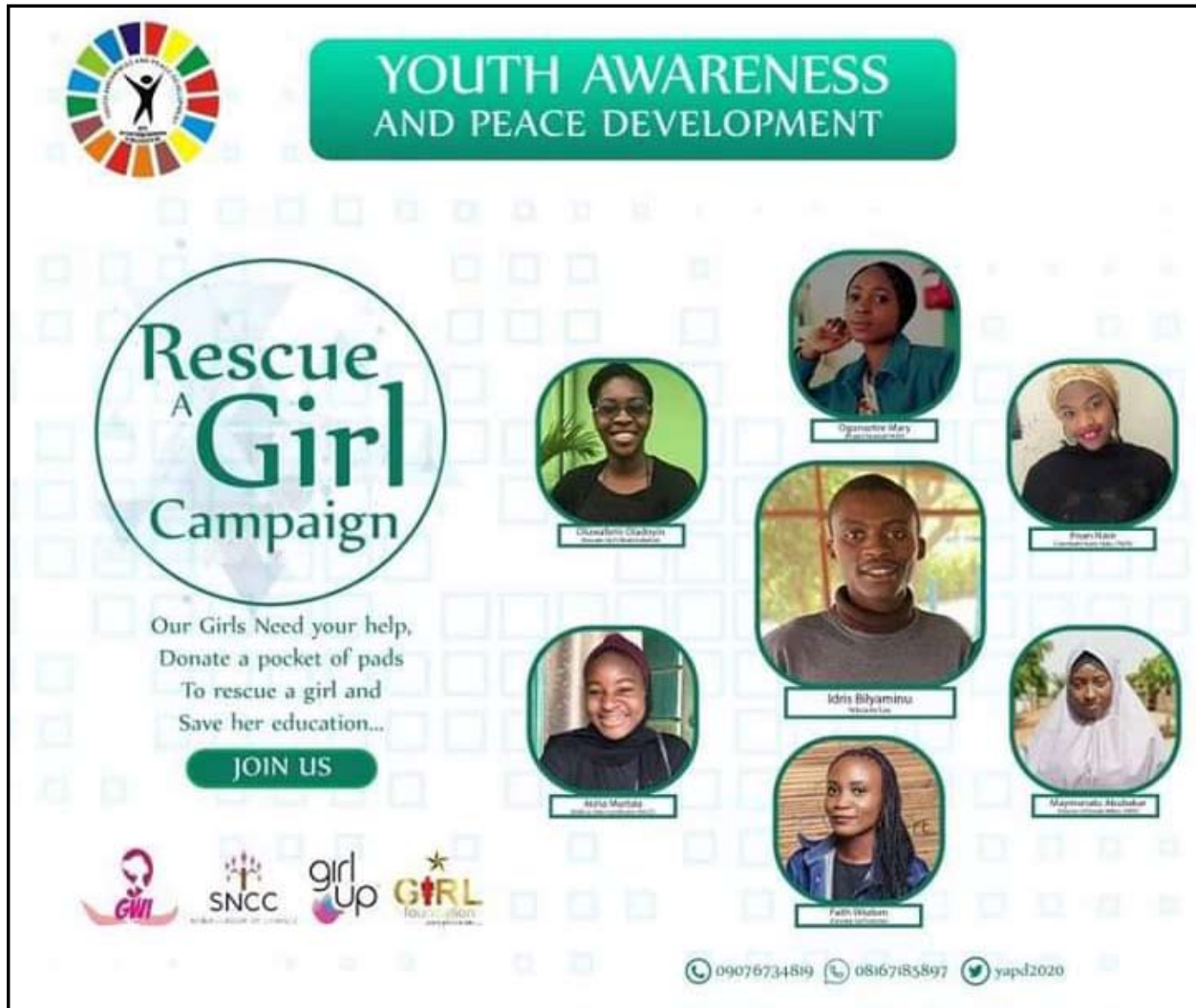
Source: <http://thehumanitarianwatch.org/index.php/2020/08/31/donga-matung-h4bf-undp-global-aid-for-africa-train-empower-women-on-how-to-survive-pandemics/>

Website: <http://www.h4bfcooperative.com/>

Email: info@h4bfcooperative.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/h4bf.Cooperative/>

Human Interest



Rescue a Girl Campaign in Nigeria Focuses on Menstrual Problems and Solutions

By Idris Bilyaminu Ndasadu' Lau, Nigeria

Introduction

The women and girls from poor communities are mostly plagued with insufficient funds to purchase menstrual hygiene items and a lack of access to WASH facilities, where they can dispose of their used menstrual items. Some of our research shows that, in a 2015 survey titled "An Assessment of Menstrual Hygiene Management in Rural Communities and Secondary Schools" conducted by UNICEF, women and school girls in Nigeria face many challenges when they are on their period.

Objectives

The project is designed to create awareness and capacity building on menstrual hygiene and access to clean sanitary pads

for women and girls child on how to increase access to proper hygiene, WASH facilities, and sanitary pads.

Strategy

The project will be implemented in Sabon Hero Village along Millennium City Kaduna State, a small rural community with about 500 women and girls child from various ethnicities residing in the state. With about five years experience working with girls, 8 out of 10 have never heard about menstruation when they have their first menses; first menses surprise them. Most of these girls feel ashamed, feel that something is wrong, when they see blood for the first time. They don't know what to do or what to use; some use dirty or old rags.

We will engage with both young women

and girls to end the stigma and discrimination in girls due to their menstrual period. We will also provide sanitary pads, which the majority cannot afford to buy. They also lack information on sexual infection and prevention.

Activities

We will create a safe discussion in the community using health advocates to share information and encourage both young women and adolescent girls. The purpose of this awareness program is to create confidence on menstrual periods and teach them how to prevent sexual infection.

Contact Idris for more information.

WhatsApp: +2348167185897

Email: yapd2020@gmail.com

Twitter and Instagram: yapd2020

Human Interest

Groundswell News Member Helps Orphans

By Sam Mirindi, Burundi

The NGO REVITALIZE THE WORLD IN NEED ORGANIZATION, aims to stimulate the fear of the eternal and the love of neighbor by calling out to religious, organizations, peoples, governments, to aid in the healing of the planet by interveners helping people in difficulty, especially abandoned, orphaned children and those in the street, while protecting the environment.

Its mission is to educate from plays, songs, slams, and poems and to supervise children in difficulty by offering them food, clothing, and education

Its objective is to promote and defend the rights and interests of children in general, orphans and abandoned in particular, but also to fight against pollution of the atmosphere.

After Aciza Mirindi interviewed Samuel, he wrote, "Let us underline that their target groups are: abandoned orphan children and those in the street, widowed women, the environment, orphanages.

"Their areas of intervention are (among others) social support, education, the fight against child exploitation, gender-based violence, food security, and environmental protection," he added.

Samuel replied, "*In my opinion, the growth of the world population which has accelerated since the Second World War poses various technical, economic, political, and ecological problems. While studies are multiplying on the food resources of the planet and the increase in the population of various countries, I must act because it is above all the food difficulties that have so far caught my attention! Act for environmental justice, for food insecurity, to promote vulnerable people. Finally, help the healing of the planet. In relation to this subject I find it good to supervise these abandoned orphan children and those who are especially in our streets. On this point, I implore the world governments, international NGOs, non-profit organizations, strong wealth, to intervene either in their societies or through this REWINO organization. We must all be aware finally and help this planet, which is going badly every day, to intervene and help those concerned in order to overcome this alarming situation.*"

Aciza continued, "Finally, the organization relies on members, volunteers, and employees.

"In order to develop their activities, it plans to implement a project to breed



Photo Courtesy REWINO

Samuel Mirindi sharing food with orphans and street children in Burundi.

laying and chair hens; members wish to obtain a grant, donation, or any other help to be able to finance this project. But also with a view to revealing our organization and facilitating our decent work in the field, we also need to expand and enrich our equipment."

Samuel wrote, "They have been forgotten. Forgotten by major international programs. However, orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS are estimated at 15 million! Most of them live in Africa. How could we not see them? In this continent, where access to treatment remains difficult, 80% of HIV-positive children die before the age of 5 due to lack of care. And all the others? Did we want to forget that not all children of HIV-positive parents would die? That not all were infected? The priority was elsewhere, attention turned to adults to the detriment of children. If the international organizations have played the ostrich policy, on the ground, the answers have often come from the most vulnerable, the most affected: the immediate family, the elders, the grandparents. The family structure has been remodeled to respond to the emergency, welcome the child, and avoid the worst: the street, wandering."

In addition to that, here it is really not

going well. I would seem to have your advice to see how to get out of it because it is too serious.

REWINO appeals to you to participate in the development of our organization by donating obsolete materials to us, money where all other things could facilitate our good functioning. I am available to provide you with any additional information, and to meet with you to learn about our work.

Knowing that, "The hand that gives is above the one that receives."

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

Phone: +25761348824 or +25768987077

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pg/Rewino-109057307366488/community/

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MirindiWilliam>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/samwilliam712/>

Aciza Mirindi graduated from the University of Hope of Africa in the Faculty of Letters and Sciences Department of Communication. He is the coordinator of the Club of Comments of the University of Hope of Africa. Aciza Mirindi Christian is also the initiator of the program Communicate together profit on the radio voice of hope, Ijwi riremesha 94.3 / 107.8 FM.

Human Interest

Improved Stoves or Improved Kitchens and Reforestation Project in DR Congo



Photos Courtesy AECBEM Information Team

(top left) Prince Kitumaini Kamundala and his team are making charcoal briquettes from carbonized leaves to save trees. (top right) Dinner's cooking! (left) Eco-friendly briquettes burning. (bottom left) The bases for the stoves made from sheet metal. (bottom middle) Clay pots ready to be installed on the stoves. (bottom right) Putting the stoves together.



By Prince Kitumaini Kamundala, DR Congo Action for Environment Care and Business and Ecosystem Management

Action for Environment Care and Business and Ecosystem Management (AECBEM) makes improved kitchens. We did this because people cut the trees to use as fuel for fires to prepare food, so in the framework of saving the environment, our team is thinking of making cooking that does not waste a lot of plants where we are.

People can use 10 plants the old way, but with our stove we use only one plant. We make our briquettes with green waste and clay so as not to cut the trees, and we use

the same for this improved kitchen and even the embers of the trees we can use for this kitchen.

We teach the pygmy peoples who are around parks, for example, Kahuzi Biega National Park. Kahuzi Biega National Park is in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the mountain gorilla is.

But for the moment we have financial problems to operate this project. Well, we ask the people of goodwill to help us achieve our goals to save the environment and have a good climate because without trees, without the environment, and without good life, we will die.

We ask the people of goodwill to help us

with our objectives so that we can help the people who suffer.

Together for a better world. Thank you for your support.

Please contact us.

Email: princekitumaini7@gmail.com,

WhatsApp: + 243892435588, +234974595199

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/princito.kitumainikamundala> and <https://www.facebook.com/Action-for-environment-care-and-business-and-ecosystemmanagement-110320577181745/>

LinkedIn: Princito Kitumaini Kamundala

Human Interest

Groundswell Family Helps Orphan Family



Photo: Jessa Emma

We have been publishing Ssendendo Yasin Signalaminat's stories about his efforts to help 45 orphans for more than a year. Some of our readers generously contributed to their food, rent, and a downpayment on land so they can grow their own food. These pictures are from an outing to the mountains of Nankoma Bugiri District. They are actually sitting on a boulder in the park; the camera was slanted for effect by the photographer having a little more fun.

By Iona

Ssendendo Yasin Signalaminat is the Executive Director of the Jinja Church Children's Home and Orphanage. He is helping to raise 45 children and is really struggling. Ssendendo and his wife are both orphans themselves.

Here is the description of his project proposal, which I'll be happy to email anyone who is interested:

"PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A SCHOOL HOME FOR ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN MAFUBIRA SUB COUNTY, JINJA DISTRICT FOR FIVE YEARS PERIOD (2019 - 2023)"

And here is their mission:

"The organisation was started after the realization of communities being faced with a big challenge of orphans and vulnerable children who are not accessing formal education and living in appalling situation, due to HIV/AIDS scourge and would like to access formal education and we together believe that the most viable way to liberate the orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), street children, youths of Africa is to directly invest in their formal education for this will widen their horizons and opportunities, support the youths engage in income generating activities and mobilizing the children

from streets back home and camps."

Our Groundswell effort started with very small donations from John and me when John was still alive. Jeannette matched that amount and Ssendendo was able to buy some food and a little treat for the children.

Many months later, I sent \$100 but didn't know the best way to get it to Uganda. Ssendendo had another friend in the U.S., Matt. When I sent my \$100 to Matt, he added \$70.

Over the past several months, Jacquie has sent a few larger donations and Jerry has also contributed. Jeannette also sent more. Matt continues to add U.S. dollars to the donations he channels to the orphans. He even mailed a laptop and cell phones last month.

Jeannette sent this email to me August 9th: "Wish there was more we could do for him and the children." And she sent Ssendendo this one August 15 after her donation arrived and Ssendendo sent us all an absolutely heart-warming video of the children enjoying a feast: "You are welcome my friend. So good to see everyone enjoying a meal together. Sending Love, Jeannette"

We are still a long way from getting Ssendendo all the money he needs and in the meantime, I'm continuing to publish stories by others who are also doing their best to

raise orphans without adequate funding.

You can contact Ssendendo directly at Jinja Church Children's Home and Orphanage, Mafubira Sub County, Jinja, Uganda

Email: ssendendo80yasin80@gmail.com

Phone: 256778265525

Website: <https://spiritualfamily.net/groups/profile/12714/jinja-church-children-home>. This website has the MOST adorable pictures of the children (like the one below) and some videos of them, too. Please take a few moments to check it out.



**GIVE ME ENERGY FOR MY HEART TO TURN TO THE SPIRITUAL.
GIVE ME ENERGY FOR THE SPIRITUAL TO BECOME A WAY.
GIVE ME ENERGY FOR THIS WAY TO DISPEL CONFUSION.
GIVE ME ENERGY FOR CONFUSION TO ARISE AS WISDOM.**

Submitted by C.B, Pennsylvania, USA

The Tibetan master Gampopa composed this prayer in the 12th century. It has withstood the test of time, which is always a good sign. https://dippingintolight.com/gampopa_give-me/

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>

Groundswell News Now Accepting Ads

Please consider placing your ad with us. As we are an alternative source of news, we have an alternative ad policy. Send me your material and pay what you feel is reasonable, depending on how much space your ad needs. If your ad requires some of my time to create it for you, there will be an extra charge. If you can afford \$50 for half a page and \$100 for a full page, that will be wonderful. Our distribution is small now but we hope to grow quickly and our readers are wonderfully supportive people!

Thank you.



Remember your dreams.



Messages from Our Friends

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



(after receiving invitation to our Zoom meeting)

Confirmed! Looking forward, to another ecological fellowship, like u said the best thing we can do right now is save the planet.

Ajibona Tolulope, Nigeria (Bio4Climate and Friends of Fireflies)

I would be very happy to represent my country and contribute fully to this enchanting idea and being a country representative. I grow our networks, share Grassroots Coalition works. Also find other like-minded organization to share their news with us for publications.

Let's hit the ground running; together we can do it.

Jussa Kudherezera, Zimbabwe (Manica Youth Assembly, see page 11.)

Greetings from Uganda and thank u very much for updating us with what is going on ground with *Groundswell News*.

I personally respect your work and appreciate your response towards your supporters.

I have come to know about your wonderful work through a young girl I have been helping and mentoring to start an organization, Marium, and I have really been following your paper. It represents the world and just praying that any billionaire would at one decide to fund the kind of work you are doing.

However, today I would like to ask you that during your coming publication, include my request article below. [Note from the Editor: I ran out of room in this issue and will publish Bob's article next time.]

Bob Maahe, Uganda (Uganda Youth Skills Training Organization)

I very much understand your feelings of urgency, and deeply appreciate your efforts.

And I see you burning yourself out.

This isn't all on you! It's bigger than any of us and needs all of us, and there are many blessed unresters everywhere you turn.

So please go easy on yourself. We all

have each other's backs.

Take good care,
Adam Sachs, Massachusetts USA (Biodiversity for a Livable Planet)

Thanks for the *Groundswell News Journal*. We are happy as Iganga Women and Youth Resource Centre for interacting with others on the continent.

We pray for our project proposal to be funded and have our own home and ask for a continuous publication in the *Groundswell News Journal*.

Thank you, Iona, for the much efforts in making this paper publication. May God bless you.

Ezekiel Kulaba (Iganga Women and Youth Resource Centre)

Well, despite being overloaded I could not resist the temptation to read your latest '*Groundswell News*' (#66) that arrived this morning and then go back to read the previous edition as well!

What can I say? Thank you, again, for another roundup of news showcasing the inspirational work of many people, particularly friends in Africa and Asia, who are relentless in their pursuit of a more peaceful, just, and sustainable world.

As always, I am heartened by the efforts of so many people who provide a gentle reminder that while there is so much wrong with our world, there are many people who are dedicated to healing that.

Love to you and everyone,
Robert Burrowes, Australia

Hi everybody!

Thank you so much for all you do! We are changing the world, as the world changes. I appreciate you all.

Matthew Draggio, Nevada USA

P.S. You can send checks to support Ssendendo (page 29) and the orphans to this address:

Matthew Draggio
8110 Blackfoot Way
Reno, NV 89506

Thanks for the information Mom and I

duly appreciate your kind efforts to inspire and lead this generation. I am super of our work that inspire whenever I read the differences exciting and sad stories about the globe. I hope you're doing better at this moment and keep strong which is my prayer. :)

Your Son,
Hanson G. Blayon, Liberia

Thank you. It is always a pleasure to read the newspaper.

Rituraj Phukan, India (National Coordinator for Biodiversity, The Climate Reality Project India and COO of Walk For Water.)

I hope you are doing well and look forward to meeting and hearing from you and all our dear ones.

Iona, Bravo's and thanks so much for all the coordinations and the very educative links for us to share our experiences in various fields.

Keep it up and let's Shine On.

Cheers,
Faustine Luta Odaba, Kenya (Mama Solar Africa)

As long as we continue to ignore the environment, we will see more and more orphan's, even here in the USA.

Africa will continue to have massive problems. As the article you sent points out, Asia is also in deep trouble.

Maybe continue to update how things are going with the African groups so your audience can follow them and give information about how individuals can help.

Many hard decision to make. Like I said, the environment is our number one priority, without it Nobody Wins. Absolutely the most important thing. Our environment should be our most urgent concern.

Jeannette Bartelt, Maryland USA

(After Iona sent the photo of a dress she hand-stitched.) Ooh it's very beautiful. I can make but not sure that I can make a good one like that, my women also need

Messages continued on next page

Messages continued from previous page

help from me, these are widows, poor women, most of my time I deal with poor people. Because all people don't like poor people, they are left behind, so I come in their lives to bring hope back to them and try to teach them to do things that can make them survive.

At times people don't know what to do for survive, but when I sit with them, I get some ideas from them. Then I start advising them how to stand. I'm always with the widows, orphans, and disabled people. I love being friends to such people.

When I had my project, I used to give them starting capital. I teach them things to do, for example like doing baskets. I used to sell like two goats. I give someone money and they start working, but now I also have nowhere to get money. I'm so much in worry.

Lillian Kabahuma, Uganda (Rise and Shine Women Initiative for Environment Protection and Conservation)

Dear All,

Just to let you know that we intend to establish a tree nursery to grow 50,000 trees for afforestation projects in Zimbabwe.

Biggie (Bigboy) Musemwa, Zimbabwe

Good reading from you. Charity is humanity and I think you are doing a wonderful job by helping the needy, especially in Africa. As for my organization, I'm not yet fortunate to receive something from *Groundswell*, but I'm hopeful that it will happen one day. If you can launch a fund-raising for my organization to get tailoring machines and computers for a center that Initiative for Creative Women Sierra Leone is soon to start working on in one of our districts called Portloko.

This center is called Girl Innovation Center under the project called Rural Education for the Achievement of Development (READ). The center will host teenage mothers and girls who have dropped out of school within the surrounding communities.

We are targeting 250 girls. Our mission is to discover talent, build minds to champion for the rights of women and girls to be free from inequality. Thanks for being in touch.

Binta Bah, (CEO Initiative for Creative Women)

Dear Iona and Mellissa,
Greetings from Kenya.

Thank you Iona for getting in touch, and for sharing the Minutes plus other documents with us. As I was reading through, what came to my mind is that, you have a small but very powerful team, who have the Earth and people at heart.

We in Kenya are well, we are going on with our work though schools are closed till January 2021. This is as a result of Covid-19 pandemic. Currently, we are working with teachers, learners, and their parents, through a Community Based Learning Program.

As an organization, we believe in strengthening our capacity through collaboration and networking and therefore, we are happy to be part of this team. We are ready to continue sharing our stories to energize and inspire the world.

Once again, thank you Mellissa for making this connection and thank you Iona for your interest to walk with us.

John Macharia, Kenya (Schools and Colleges Permaculture Programme)

Hello dear Iona,

I hope that you are doing well, that you will send the story that you are working and I will share that, too. (page 28). Please help find the people who will help me to find the amounts requested by my government and first to buy the vehicles for work because I'm stuck in everything because of that.

Together for a better world.

(Note from the Editor: We published Prince's story about the truck accident in our last issue. Here is his plea.)

Hello gentlemen, madam,

We are a non-profit organization called Action for the Preservation of the Environment, A.S.E in acronym. We come to you to ask you for help from people of good will. Our vehicle which helps us has worked in all our projects such as permaculture, evacuation of waste and their recycling, drinking water supply, reforestation, improved stoves, fishing, breeding, fish farming, beekeeping, etc.

The accident has occurred, and our truck cannot be repaired. Is there no way to buy

other vehicles? It helped us with community work as a donation from Miva Switzerland and Ihl Germany, but it's useless now. For this reason, we ask people for good will help us to buy a new vehicle for work because we are blocked; we do not work because of the lack of a vehicle. This is our main actor in our projects.

Thank you in advance for your help may God bless you together for a better world. Finally, ladies and gentlemen, not the environment, not life, therefore no business. We are facing financial difficulties, we would like to ask for your support and partnership in order to achieve a safe environment. Thank you!! Please email me at princekitumaini7@gmail.com and I will give you the necessary information.

Prince Kitumaini Kamundala, DR Congo (Action for Environment Care and Business and Ecosystem Management, see page 27)

[Note from the Editor: I was so delighted to get my first email from an orphan child herself. Purity, 12, is the newly-adopted daughter for Lillian Kabahuma in Uganda. We published the sad story about Purity's mother dying of HIV/AIDS in our last newspaper, leaving four children as orphans. Lillian took in three and the youngest one is living with another woman.]

Yes, Aunt I am Purity, how is you Aunt? Thank you for loving us and our mother, my first mother God took to Be with her, but He gave me another Good mother, mother of many children. I wanted to greet you. Do you also have children? Love you aunt.

Yours faithful,

Purity, and Sharon (her younger sister, 8) is greeting you.

(second email) Hello aunt. Good morning aunt. I am Purity Challot, my second name is Challot, and Sharon is called Kahunde, but Sharon doesn't know to write English yet, but she wants to write to you. Greetings to your children, and Happy birthday to them. Tell them I love to see them and play with the young ones.

Bye aunt, I will be writing to you always,
Purity Challot, Uganda

Messages continued on next page

THOSE WHO CONTEMPLATE THE BEAUTY OF THE EARTH FIND
RESERVES OF STRENGTH THAT WILL ENDURE AS LONG AS LIFE LASTS.

- Rachel Carson -

<https://spiritualityhealth.com/quotes/those-who-contemplate-beauty-earth-find-reserves>

Messages continued from previous page

Hello Iona,

It was great being able to talk with you and learn about some of your experiences with the newspaper. Attached are photographs of the front and back of the paint pallet I have hanging on my wall.

As I had mentioned in our conversation, this pallet was originally hanging in my grandparents home. I did not get to visit my grandparents very often growing up as I lived in Dallas, Texas and they lived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

However, like many of my relatives, I vividly remember their beautiful house in Germantown Philadelphia and all of the artwork my grandparents had displayed. My grandfather worked many odd jobs and I understand that he and my grandma

would collect and sell antiques and art pieces.

Eventually my grandfather and grandmother had to move into a nursing home and sold their house. My family traveled to Philadelphia so that we could help them sell the house. While doing so, I asked to keep the pallet. I had always enjoyed looking at its different paint splotches and I would make up stories about the different faces and animals I saw on the pallet. The piece actually couldn't fit in my suitcase so my dad split it in two in order to get it back to Dallas! If you look carefully at the back you can see to the right of John W. Hathaway a line where the pallet was split and then glued back together. Thankfully, when I came to New Jersey I was able to

take the pallet in one piece!

As I mentioned before, the name John W. Hathaway is inscribed on the back. I personally do not remember much about him, but I do know that he was an artist who worked in Philadelphia. I tried searching his name on Google but didn't find anything about him from a reliable source. Perhaps Jeanette knows more of his background and if my grandparents knew him personally.

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me, and I hope that you can continue enjoying the ocean during this pleasant weather!

Cheers,

Kristen Rundstein, New Jersey USA



Daniel Ellsberg Tells UK Court That U.S. Seeks Both 'Revenge' Against Julian Assange and to 'Crush' Future Whistleblowers

The Pentagon Papers leaker called Assange's prosecution the most "significant attack on freedom of the press" since his 1971 case.

By Brett Wilkins, excerpt
Common Dreams: September 16, 2020

Daniel Ellsberg – who famously leaked the Pentagon Papers exposing U.S. lies and crimes in Southeast Asia – told a British court on Tuesday that the U.S. government is seeking both "revenge" against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and to "crush" future whistleblowers with its extradition attempt.

Ellsberg's eight-page written statement to the London court considering a U.S. re-

quest to extradite Assange was an incisive statement of support for the 49-year-old Australian, who has been jailed in the U.K. since 2019 for avoiding a 2010 international arrest warrant from Sweden for alleged sex offenses.

Assange's imprisonment followed a nearly seven-year period of political asylum granted by Ecuador – which agreed he could face political persecution if extradited to Sweden or the U.S. – spent entirely in the South American nation's London embassy.

Last year, Nils Melzer, the United Nations special *rappporteur* on torture, repeatedly called the cumulative effects of the U.S., Britain, and Sweden "ganging up" on Assange a form of "psychological torture." The Trump administration last year

formally requested Britain's extradition of Assange under the 1917 Espionage Act and the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. U.S. authorities accuse him of conspiring to hack government computers and illegally disclosing classified and sensitive national defense information.

Critics from both sides of the mainstream political aisle have called Assange's actions "reckless."

At the height of WikiLeaks' revelations, some leading Republicans and Donald Trump called for his execution. . . .

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/09/16/daniel-ellsberg-tells-uk-court-us-seeks-both-revenge-against-julian-assange-and>