

# 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](http://www.groundswellnews.org) Issue No. 69: November 17, 2020*



Photo: Georgina Smith/CIAT (public domain), via Climate Visuals

*Monitoring silt levels in Kenya to help control soil erosion.*

## Africa's Resistance Grows as Climate Crisis Worsens

By Kieran Cooke  
Climate News Network: October 29, 2020

Battered by storms and droughts during a tough 2019, Africa's resistance to the climate crisis left no room for passivity.

LONDON, UK – Attempting to come to any general conclusions on the state of a vast, varied, and complex continent may be a tricky business, but Africa's resistance to the climate crisis shows it rejects any idea of settling for victimhood.

A new report, State of the Climate in Africa 2019, published by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), makes that

clear. You can read it at [https://library.wmo.int/doc\\_num.php?explnum\\_id=10386](https://library.wmo.int/doc_num.php?explnum_id=10386).

It reaches some grim conclusions. Increased temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, rising sea levels, and more extreme weather are threatening human health and safety across the continent, says the report.

“Climate change is having a growing impact on the African continent, hitting

**Resistance** continued on page 3

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# 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

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## 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.



## Iona's Column:

### *Always Hoping to Help Our Friends*



Dearest Global Family,

I get very close to some of the people whose stories you see in our newspaper. Right now, there are two who are really in trouble. Lillian is the woman who took in three orphans a couple of months ago but she already had a full house of other orphans and was helping two women who gave birth at young ages and were evicted from their homes. Lillian is taking care of them and their babies as well as the orphans. She just wrote that she has no food. You can see her letter on page 29.

Prince Kitumaini Kamundala is the other one. I published the story about his truck accident a while ago. Thankfully, nobody was hurt but the truck cannot be fixed so his amazing projects (pages 22 and 23) have come to a halt. His plea for assistance is also on page 29.

As you know, I created “Choose a Charity” section but the results of giving were disappointing. It's important to remember that this is a newspaper, not a bank. However, my hope remains that if you contact someone you might wish to help, they will guide you as to the best way to get money to them. Remember, American dollars go a long way in Africa or other impoverished countries.

With love and hope in my heart for all who suffer,

*Iona*

# Solar Cooking Photo Essay by Asulma Centre Self Help Group in Kenya

By Samuel Odhiambo, Kenya

Our name is Asulma Centre Self Help Group and I am the project leader. A better environment for future generations is our ultimate goal.

Asulma Centre is a community-based organization that was created in the year 2008 with the aim of eradicating illiteracy among members of Kariobangi-Korogochi and its environs while at the same time fighting social injustices like rape, early pregnancies, early marriages, and drug addiction.

The centre, which was started as a school, has grown and besides offering approved curriculum by the Ministry of Education, now promotes Integrated Solar Cooking under the leadership of Samuel Odhiambo.

Integrated Solar Cooking involves empowering people to harness the sun's energy and use it to cook, while at the same time complimenting it with well-insulated, fireless cookers and wood-saving stoves. We also empower members of the community to use briquettes made from charcoal dust.

The bottom line is that rampant felling of trees has resulted into global heating, whose negative effects are being felt by everyone. Embracing solar cooking reduces deforestation, especially among those who rely on charcoal or open fires.

We know we cannot achieve our national target to

**Solar** continued on next page



Photos Courtesy Asulma

*Asulma members Vincent Onyango and Samuel Odhiambo (facing the group) in green T-shirts are teaching the others how to use solar cookers.*

## Resistance continued from page 1

the most vulnerable hardest and contributing to food insecurity, population displacement, and stress on water resources," says Petteri Taalas, the WMO secretary-general.

"In recent months we have seen devastating floods, an invasion of desert locusts, and now face the looming specter of drought because of a La Niña event," he says. "The human and economic toll has been aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic."

### Killer Cyclone

Drought caused considerable damage in 2019, particularly across southern Africa. Much of East Africa also suffered drought but then, late in the year, there was torrential rain and serious flooding and landslides in the region.

The trend, says the report, is for continuing increases in temperature: 2019 was among the three warmest years ever recorded in Africa. The WMO predicts that rainfall is likely to decrease over northern and southern regions but increase over the Sahel.

There are also likely to be more weather-related extreme events. In March 2019 Cyclone Idai hit the coast of Mozambique and went on to devastate large areas of Malawi, Zimbabwe, and surrounding countries. Described as the most destructive cyclone ever recorded in the southern

hemisphere, Idai killed hundreds of people and displaced several hundred thousand.

Sea levels are rising well above the global average in many parts of Africa, the report says. Coastal degradation and erosion is a major challenge, particularly in West Africa. More than 50% of the coastlines in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Togo are eroding – a trend likely to continue in future years.

The knock-on effects of these changes in climate are considerable. Approximately 60% of the total population of Africa is dependent on agriculture for a living.

Heat and drought, plus flood damage in some areas, are likely to reduce crop productivity. Changes in climate are also leading to pest outbreaks.

In what it describes as the worst case climate change scenario, the report says crop yields could drop by 13% by mid-century across West and Central Africa, 11% in North Africa, and 8% in the eastern and southern regions of the continent. Rice and wheat crops would be particularly badly affected.

### Combating the Crisis

Increased heat and continually-changing rainfall patterns are also likely to lead to the spread of disease – and a fall-off in economic production in many countries.

But the report does point to some posi-

tive changes, showing Africa's resistance to the crisis. Though the continent is responsible for only a small percentage of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, many countries in Africa are taking measures aimed at tackling climate change.

Solar power is becoming more widespread, with several large-scale projects planned. Early warning systems monitoring the approach of such cataclysmic events as Cyclone Idai are being installed across the continent.

Farm incomes in many areas are increasing, due to the application of more efficient cultivation methods, such as micro-irrigation. But good planning, based on reliable data, is essential, the report says.

"The limited uptake and use of climate information services in development planning and practice in Africa is due in part to the paucity of reliable and timely climate information," says Vera Songwe, the executive secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

*Kieran Cooke, a founding editor of Climate News Network, is a former foreign correspondent for the BBC and Financial Times. He now focuses on environmental issues.*

**Source:** <https://climatenetwork.net/africas-resistance-grows-as-climate-crisis-worsens/>

*Climate Emergency*

**Solar** *continued from previous page*

reduce greenhouse gas emission by 30% in 2030 without addressing deforestation. Millions of other rural households in Kenya use an average of 10 kilograms (22 pounds) of dry wood a day to cook, an equivalent of a three-year, fast-growing tree. This is what drives us in promoting Integrated Solar Cooking.

We are involved in promoting integrated solar cooking among people in Kenya. We

teach people to harness the sun's energy to cook and in areas where the sun is not available, they should use efficient wood stoves and complement both with fireless cookers that are well insulated.

We are involved, too, in sprouting activities in which we inform them to use less fuel to cook beans, green grains, or peas. In all these, the aim is to help on rampant cutting down of trees which have had severe effects

on our climate.

In 2005, Green Foundation Africa reported that Kenya loses about 5.6 million trees daily. This is insane.

**Contact Samuel Odhiambo:**

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**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/Asulma-Centre-Self-Help-Group-1019285011511571/>



*(top left) Warren Odange (in cap), from Engineers Without Borders, Kenya pays us a visit on solar cooking. Judith Ajok is using a Haines cooker 1.0 on the veranda to cook ugali, a traditional food made of maize flour, while Samuel (in white) looks on. (top right) Judith is cooking an omelette in a solar box.*

*(bottom left) Elizabeth Wasonga is cooking kale in a Copenhagen solar cooker.*

*(bottom right) This solar cooker is boiling water.*



*Climate Emergency*



Photo: Adam Jones, Ph.D., via Wikimedia Commons

*Rural Burkina Faso: Part of the Sahel, but with plenty of trees.*

# African Desert is Home to Abundant Forest Growth

By Tim Radford  
Climate News Network: October 27, 2020

Researchers have found an unknown wealth of trees in an African desert zone supposedly too arid for green growth.

LONDON, UK – With help from high resolution satellite imagery and some advanced artificial intelligence techniques, European scientists have been counting the trees in a parched African desert.

They pored over 1.3 million square kilometers (0.8 million square miles) of the waterless western Sahara and the arid lands of the Sahel to the south, to identify what is in effect an unknown forest. This region – a stretch of dunes and dryland larger than Angola, or Peru, or Niger – proved to be home to 1.8 billion trees and shrubs with crowns larger than three square meters (nearly 10 square feet).

“We were very surprised to see that quite

a few trees actually grow in the Sahara Desert because up till now, most people thought that virtually none existed. We counted hundreds of millions of trees in the desert alone,” said Martin Brandt, a geographer at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, who led the research.

He and colleagues from Germany, France, Senegal, Belgium, and NASA in the U.S. report in the journal *Nature* that they used an artificial intelligence technique called “deep learning” and satellite imagery so advanced that – from space – a camera could resolve an object half a meter (1.64 feet) or more in diameter, to see if they could answer unresolved questions about all those trees beyond the world’s forests.

“Trees outside of forested areas are not usually included in climate models, and we know very little about their carbon stocks. They are an unknown component in the global carbon cycle.”

Trees matter, wherever they are. In cities, they enhance urban life and sustain property values. In forests, they conserve

and recycle water, shelter millions of animals and smaller plants, and absorb atmospheric carbon. In grasslands they conserve soils, offer habitat for species, and provide subsistence fuel, food, and fodder for humans and animals.

But trees beyond the forests are an unknown factor when it comes to the puzzle of the global carbon budget and the great challenge of containing runaway climate change.

“Trees outside of forested areas are not usually included in climate models, and we know very little about their carbon stocks,” Dr. Brandt said. “They are basically a white spot on maps and an unknown component in the global carbon cycle.”

The total identified in the target zone of the Sahara and the Sahel is almost certainly an under-estimate: the technology did not and could not pinpoint trees with a crown or shade area smaller than 3 square meters (9.84 square feet).

The study adds to the chronicle of surprises delivered by tree and forest research.

**Desert Forest** *continued on next page*

*Climate Emergency*

# How the 'Children of the Moon' Helped Save a Tropical Forest

## Putting Nature At the Centre

By Stephen Leahy

Need to Know: October 10, 2020

### Vikings and Children of the Moon

"Do you know about the Children of the Moon?" asked Alejandro Argumedo, a Peruvian scientist, glancing toward an albino child entering a straw-roofed hut.

Alejandro and I were sitting under some palm trees overlooking a very languid south Caribbean sea. It was mid-afternoon; windless, hot and humid; siesta time. I was exhausted and jet lagged but still wired with excitement having arrived a few hours earlier in the village of Ustupu. It's a small low-lying island off the eastern coast of Panama and home to 4,500 Kuna Indians.

"We're pretty close to the Equator. The Kuna are very dark skinned so they're protected from the sun's ultraviolet rays," Alejandro explained.

While we sat, two Kuna men began loading fishing nets into a dugout canoe called an 'ulu' that's fashioned from a single enormous tree. Another Kuna, not quite five feet tall, staggered across the white coral sand carrying an outboard motor as big as he was.

"I couldn't even lift one end of that motor," I said in amazement.

Alejandro just smiled. He was a Quechua from the Andes Mountains and well aware of the practical strength, toughness, and endurance of indigenous people living traditionally.

He continued, "Albinos don't have any protective melatonin so they get skin cancer



Photo Courtesy Need to Know

*Albinos, once ostracized, are now seen as a blessing: a special gift from the ancestors. They have protected over 90 percent of the original forest in their territory for nearly 100 years.*

and the sun damages their eyes. They usually don't live very long, even today."

"That's horrible" I said recalling the slim albino teenager who'd eagerly hauled me and my luggage out of the canoe that brought me here. His eagerness had an anxiousness, as if trying to prove he was

as capable as the other short, wide-bodied, dark-skinned Kuna teens.

"Less than 100 years ago any albino child was killed soon after birth," Alejandro said. "Called 'Children of the Moon' for their pale skin, they were considered bad luck."

**Albinos** *continued on next page*

### Desert Forest *continued from previous page*

In the last few years scientists have essayed a global census of woody growths wider than 5 centimeters (2 inches) at breast height – that's the botanist's definition of a tree – and arrived at a total of more than 3 trillion.

#### New Map Possible

They have also counted the different kinds of tree: more than 60,000 species. They have already made attempts to measure the extent of tree cover in dryland and savannah regions and identified a kind of hidden forest.

They have calculated that a determined global tree planting campaign could absorb enough carbon to make a formidable dif-

ference to the challenge of global heating, and they have confirmed that conserved natural forests are, even on the simple basis of human economics, a bargain: forests are worth more to the world when they flourish than when they are cleared.

The new approach – the match of artificial intelligence with high resolution imagery – could one day help identify not just trees, but different tree species. It could, researchers hope, eventually even provide a reliable count of trees in a forest, although where canopies overlap it will always be difficult to number the trunks that support them. It offers the world's forest

scientists a new starting point for a map of all the planet's trees.

"Doing so wouldn't have been possible without this technology," Dr. Brandt said. "Indeed, I think it marks the beginning of a new scientific era."

**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/african-desert-is-home-to-abundant-forest-growth/>

## *Climate Emergency*

**Albinos** *continued from previous page*

The Kuna are a subsistence culture living off fishing and small gardens. Healthy, strong children who could pass on their skills as adults were essential to survival of the community.

Surprisingly, the Kuna have the highest rates of albinism in the world, with one child in 150 born albino.

Alejandro continued with the story:

In the early 1900s the Kuna had increasing conflicts with officials from the new Republic of Panama who wanted them to give up their culture and lands. In addition, some Kuna men were tricked or forced into doing work on sugar and banana plantations. Conflicts became violent with police raiding villages and arresting Kuna men.

Genetics was a new science at this time and the abundance of Kuna albinos attracted growing interest. American adventurer Richard Marsh believed the albinos were a “white” race descended from errant Vikings who arrived in the Americas long before Columbus. In the early 1920s Marsh brought several albino Kuna to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington to be studied by researchers.

The Panama canal had been completed and the U.S. had a considerable presence in the country including several naval vessels. However, doing additional genetic research with the Kuna in Panama was difficult because of the ongoing conflict. Marsh lobbied the Panamanian government to give them autonomy. The Kuna, seeing U.S. support, declared independence and attacked police outposts in their territory freeing Kuna prisoners. In response, the Panamanian military were about to invade Kuna territory until, at Marsh’s urging, the U.S. Navy intervened.

With American support, the Kuna obtained autonomy over their territory – all because of their Children of the Moon. They were now seen as a blessing; a special gift from the ancestors, Alejandro concluded.

One result of that autonomy is that over 90 percent of the original forest in their territory remains after nearly 100 years. As I noted in Part 1 last month, an estimated 80 percent of the Earth’s plants, insects, and animals are found in Indigenous territory. However Indigenous people rarely have autonomy over the lands they have occupied for hundreds and thousands of years. Nation-states are loathe to give up control of “public lands,” although happy enough to sell or auction off those lands to the highest bidder. Of course European states had previously laid claim to Indig-

enous lands which included the Americas, Australia, Africa, and elsewhere during the 15th and 16th centuries.

### **Clash of Worldviews**

During the era of foreign takeovers, the Spanish were sometimes considerate enough to read a statement laying out their claims to the local native people. There wasn’t much discussion since the local people didn’t understand Spanish. And even if there was good translation, the Spanish claims involved strange and bewildering concepts of “property” and “ownership of land.” For many Indigenous peoples, individual ownership of a piece of ground was an alien, even absurd concept, akin to claiming that you owned the air or the clouds.

Concepts like property, boundaries, and the economy are imaginary constructs. A useful Need-to-Know to keep in mind is that we invented these abstract ideas. They don’t exist in the real, physical world. As a long-time property owner it’s taken me a long time to wrap my head around this. The living world, that we’re a part of, is a complex web of relationships and interactions. Everything is connected to everything else. That’s why if you slap a big glass bowl over your home and surrounding area, things will start to go bad pretty quickly. That’s our fundamental ecological reality. It makes the idea of private property ownership – ‘this is mine and I can do whatever I want to it’ – absurd.

Even more problematic in our interconnected, finite world is a market-based economic system that encourages buying a piece of land, stripping and selling off the trees, minerals, soil, etc. to buy more land to do the same thing again, and again.

Those abstract concepts – property ownership and market-based economy – are two of the main reasons more than 75 percent of Earth’s land areas have been severely altered resulting in up to a million species that may be pushed to extinction.

### **We are Nature and Nature is Us**

If nature is in trouble, then we are in trouble. This is an overarching Need-to-Know. This reality is being increasingly recognized. So it’s another Need-to-Know that 76 world leaders including Justin Trudeau, Jacinda Ardern, Emmanuel Macron, Angela Merkel, and Boris Johnson recently signed a statement that said, “We are in a state of planetary emergency.” They also committed to protect 30 percent of land and oceans by 2030. (Only 15 percent

of the Earth’s lands and only 7 percent of the oceans currently have some formal level of protection.)

I’m on the fifth or sixth version of this issue. I was going to talk about how the term “protection” has 50 different shades of meaning and that Indigenous and local peoples need to be the ones defining it for their communities. Then, how countries and conservation organizations want to use market-based incentives to raise hundreds of billions of dollars annually to protect 30 percent of land and oceans by 2030. And then, how using the same economic system that’s destroying nature to protect it isn’t likely to work, since it’s not grounded in our ecological reality. But I’m not going there right now.

One of my goals with Need to Know is to share useful ideas and helpful bits of wisdom. So here’s a practical suggestion based on something Indigenous architect Alfred Waugh told me a few days ago: “Let’s put nature at the centre of our lives.” There are lots of ways to do this. Acknowledging that “we are nature and nature is us” is one way. For me it also means being outside as much as I can. I’m writing this in a small forest I walk to every day when I’m home. It means walking or riding a bike to go places so I can feel the wind, hear the leaves, and smell...well, life I guess. And it means stopping often to really see and appreciate nature in its bazillion variations.

There’s tons of research on the health and well-being benefits of our being in any kind of natural setting – a backyard, a park, an urban garden. We feel better outside because that’s our true home.

What does putting nature at the centre of your life mean to you? I would love to hear your thoughts.

There’s a 15 minute video created by teenage girls and community members in Ustupu at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tEFuyEyG0Q&feature=youtu.be>.

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**Stephen Leahy, Need to Know: Science and Insight; 2019 SEAL Award for Climate Reporting; Member: Society of Environmental Journalists; Writers’ Union of Canada**

**Source:** <https://leahy.substack.com/p/putting-nature-at-the-centre>

## Climate Emergency



Photo: Peretz Partensky, via Wikimedia Commons

*Climate crisis? Not everyone has got the message yet.*

## Scientists' Oath Pledges Full Climate Crisis Facts

By Alex Kirby  
Climate News Network: November 9, 2020

Do you ever feel you can't share the reality of what you know about the climate crisis? A new scientists' oath could help.

LONDON, UK – If you devote your working life to extending what we know about the climate crisis and how we may face it, you can now take a scientists' oath, a pledge committing you to tell the unvarnished facts: uncompromising public statements explaining how grave the reality is.

Two UK-based groups are urging climate scientists and researchers to promise full disclosure: what their evidence shows, what it requires from them and from the rest of us in our personal lives, coupled with a demand for a matching response from their employers.

The pull-no-punches initiative is the brainchild of Scientists for Global Responsibility and the Rapid Transition Alliance (which helps to fund the Climate News Network). It has a parallel in a long-established practice in the medical world: Hippocrates, a physician born in Greece around 2,500 years ago, was known as the Father of Medicine, and many newly-qualified doctors today adopt what is still called the Hippocratic oath, an ethical code designed to guide their professional conduct.

This modern successor, A Science Oath for the Climate: a pledge of scrutiny, integrity, and engagement, has already attracted

the support of a number of internationally-renowned climate experts. Its language is spare, but its purpose is beyond doubt: those who know what climate change is doing must warn the world:

*Science has no higher purpose than to understand and help maintain the conditions for life to thrive on Earth. We may look beyond our planet with wonder and learn, but this is our only viable home.*

*Our dwelling though is critically threatened by the loss of the stable climate which has allowed humanity to flourish. We pledge to act in whatever ways we are able, in our lives and work, to prevent catastrophic climate disruption.*

*To translate this pledge into a force for real change, we will:*

- *explain honestly, clearly and without compromise, what scientific evidence tells us about the seriousness of the climate emergency,*

- *not second-guess what might seem politically or economically pragmatic when describing the scale and timeframe of action needed to deliver the 1.5°C and 2°C commitments, specified in the Paris Climate Agreement. And, speak out about what is not compatible with the commitments, or is likely to undermine them*

- *to the best of our abilities, and mindful of the urgent need for systemic change, seek to align our own behaviour with the climate targets, and reduce our own personal carbon emissions to dem-*

*onstrate the possibilities for change.*

*With courtesy and firmness, we will hold our professional associations, institutions, and employers to these same standards, and invite our colleagues across the scientific community to sign, act on, and share this pledge.*

One signatory, Chris Rapley, is well-known for his work in Antarctica and in the communication of climate science. Professor Rapley told the Climate News Network, "The climate crisis is unfolding before us. Our ability to retain some control of our climate destiny is slipping away... The climate science community has a duty to speak what it knows in the hope of evoking the necessary scale and pace of societal response. The oath commits us to doing so."

To see who has already signed the science oath – and to add your name – click here: <https://www.sgr.org.uk/projects/science-oath-climate-text-and-signing>.

Hippocrates was honored as the first doctor to distinguish medicine from superstition – no bad example for those working today to convince a hesitant world that there is a vital difference between climate fact and fiction.

*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.*

**Source:** <https://climatenetwork.org/scientists-oath-pledges-full-climate-crisis-facts/>



*Climate Emergency*

# Climate Education in Schools Is Key to Tackling Climate Crisis



Below 2° C | Primary Source, Climate Reality July 31, 2020

Climate education is key to turning the tide on this crisis and creating a safe, sustainable world for generations to come.

In June, new state learning standards were announced that will make New Jersey the first state in the nation to require that climate education be taught in all grades, K-12.

First Lady of New Jersey and Climate Reality Leader Tammy Murphy long has been a champion of the importance of climate education in schools, and worked hard to ensure that these new rules were adopted in New Jersey. A few short months ago, this announcement would have been, in all probability, national (if not international) news.

But amid the Covid-19 pandemic, and with protests, unrest, and turmoil boiling over all across our country, this announcement didn't get the attention, nor the headlines, it deserved. Not only will climate education be required in science classes in New Jersey, but it will be taught in seven subject areas, beginning in 2021, with final implementation of these new standards by 2022. These subjects include: twenty-first century life and careers, comprehensive health and physical education, science, social studies, technology, visual and performing arts, and world languages.

## Living with Covid-19

As we move through this unprecedented time in our collective history, how we keep lessons from Covid-19 and the importance of doing the hard work of understanding and addressing racial and social injustice – codifying these into law and developing formal and informal educational tools – will be vital. Connecting the dots between our climate crisis, poverty, race, access to

affordable health care, and health outcomes of adults and children across the U.S. remains critical to keeping the nation focused on the hard work that needs to be done, each step of the way. The New Jersey climate education requirements in cross-curricular subject areas are important opportunities to teach children how we can change the crash course we are on with our natural

world, at the same time as we begin to heal our cities, towns, states, and our nation. They can serve as a model for other states around the country.

Imagine for a moment in visual and performing arts, a play, a story, or a poem written to include these connections and acted out by our children. How powerful and empowering this will be – not only for our children but for us as parents.

## Pollution and Your Health

At the same time, the connections between pollution, negative health impacts, and the zip code you are born into are clear – and are now even clearer for all to see. If these connections seemed hidden before, Covid-19's direct and disproportionate impacts on communities of color and low-income communities in close proximity to sources of pollution like power plants, incinerators, and industrial centers are being proven through peer-reviewed studies. Teaching these connections, in social studies, in technology, and in twenty-first century life and careers opens up incredible learning opportunities.

Developing this new curriculum for New Jersey schools, and the ways school districts use and adapt existing and proven resources will be important to the success of this endeavor. According to the June 3rd New Jersey Department of Education announcement, these new standards are “the foundation which districts will build coherent curriculum and instruction.”

However, we do not want to see added teaching requirements being put on already stretched educators, without added or redirected financial and staff resources to implement them. Real dollar allocations will be needed in state and local budgets

to ensure a successful implementation of these new standards.

Washington State can serve as an example. Over the past few years, Washington has committed, as part of its state budget, millions of dollars for teacher training on climate science. New Jersey will need to train and retrain teachers across multiple subject areas on the new curriculum requirements. A recent nine-part, in-depth reporting project by the Hechinger Report looked at how climate change is currently being taught around the country. The report showed how most textbooks are coming up short, and that a lot of schools rely on individual teachers to create, find, and implement curriculum that they may not have the background or training to teach.

How New Jersey implements these exciting new standards, including providing teacher training, curriculum development, and accessibility, will be important to watch as a model for the nation. As we talk to our kids about the importance of democracy and being involved in our democratic systems, New Jersey parents will need to stay on top of local school board decisions and recommendations regarding these new climate education requirements.

## Get Involved

Schools for Climate Action is an organization that helps parents, youth, educators and school boards create resolutions that demand climate action. According to an April 2020 article by the National Center for Science Education, “No fewer than 18 measures to support climate change education in public schools were active in the statehouses of 10 states so far in 2020.”

As concerned citizens, parents should consider running for school board, in whatever state they live, all across the country.

By showing our children how important this is to us, we also let them know we care about their health, our state, and the relationships and interconnectedness between global issues like climate change, democracy, equity, and racial and social justice.

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**Source:** <https://below2c.org/2020/07/climate-education-in-schools-is-key-to-tackling-the-climate-crisis/>

*Earth Regeneration*



Photo Courtesy MAYA

(left to right) Tinashe Muzama, Tatenda Bindura, and a woman farmer who is preparing to plant maize crops at the edge of the mountain.

## **Youth Group Returns to Dangamvura Mountain to Educate Rural Farmers About Protecting their Environment, Avoiding Continuing Deforestation**

By Jussa Kudherezera, Zimbabwe

Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA) today visited Dangamvura Mountain to warn and inform prospective urban farmers that the Dangamvura Mountain and other surrounding mountains are not up for cultivation purposes. Prospective urban farmers should approach Mutare City Council to be allocated pieces of land that are reserved for farming so as to avoid increasing deforestation and contributing to more climate change crisis bedeviling our beautiful eastern highlands.

Mountains surrounding our precious

City should be protected at all costs for future use with the future generations; thus, MAYA advocates for the protection of these mountains from urban farming from the prospective urban land users.

Residents and City Council should maximize their efforts to plant more indigenous trees that will in turn protect the soil through roots and also through the shade provided for other species around. These trees will also act as windbreaks. Biodiversity is critical and necessary for our survival; therefore, there is a need for robust action against deforestation and land degradation for selfish gains and jeop-

ardizing future uses.

Tell a friend about MAYA and bring a friend to MAYA.

#MAYA 4 Environmental Protection  
#NOISE PA ENVIRONMENT

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*Earth Regeneration*



Photo: <https://hemptoday.net/ihba-retrofit-project/> ©

Highland Hemp House, Bellingham, Washington, USA. The time for hemp is now, and while laws and regulations concerning the production, processing, and consumption of hemp and cannabis slowly move forward, people the world over are pushing the envelope in finding new ways to use hemp.

## Home Retrofitted with Hempcrete in Groundbreaking Building Project

By Vic Bishop  
Waking Times: October 12, 2020 ©

In May of this year, we reported on an ingenious building design by a group of Moroccan students who built an off-grid 'hemp' house made almost entirely from hemp and solar panels. Biodegradable hemp Covid-19 face masks are already hitting the market to address the colossal non-biodegradable waste this crisis is creating. A recent agricultural study pointed out that planting hemp can even help address the declining bee population.

A home in Bellingham, Washington State USA is receiving acclaim by those pushing the limits in the development of hemp building materials. Called the Highland Hemp House (HHH), the 1970's home has been retrofitted with hempcrete and is now serving as a showcase for materials and techniques in converting older, inefficient housing into modern, sustainable, and very efficient structures.

Pamela Bosch, owner of the Highland Hemp House, first became interested in building with hemp about five years ago, and after building a test project, she convinced local city government to grant permits to be build a larger structure and begin retrofitting the main house.

Beginning the endeavor by finding the right people and materials, "Bosch stripped away the toxic layers from the walls of her 1970s-era Bellingham, Washington home last spring, and through the summer replaced that material with a hempcrete mixture carefully sourced from suppliers and consultants in Europe.

She also convinced local authorities about hemp's viability and successfully worked her project through local building codes – complex undertakings she'll share with the International Hemp Building Association," as quoted in <https://hemptoday.net/ihba-retrofit-project/>.

The project is serving as a classroom for many other innovators who are learning

how to use hemp in construction to further the goal of moving toward a more sustainable and efficient future. Speaking on the importance of this, and why America needs hempcrete in particular now more than ever, Bosch comments:

*In the U.S., we are not exposed to residences that have been occupied for centuries as in Europe, Asia, and Africa – especially on the West Coast. But don't we want buildings to endure? Wouldn't it be a better use of materials to design for functional longevity? Hempcrete is essentially reconstituted limestone. It is not dissimilar to many buildings of antiquity that used burned lime as a binder and a surface treatment.*

Nature has utilized lime/calcium for shelter and structure for hundreds of millions of years. Nothing synthetic can compare. For endurance, health, versatility, or performance.

*Elsewhere you have read about the energy conserving, carbon capturing benefits  
Hemp Home continued on next page*

*Earth Regeneration*

Hemp Home *continued from previous page*



Photo: <https://www.whatcomtalk.com/2017/11/05/bellingham-hemp-house/> ©

*“If I can build a house out of materials that are not well understood, so can you. The reasons to do so are too compelling not to try,” says Pamela Bosch.*

*of building with lime and bio-aggregate. Consider now how calcium, the building block of ancient skeletons and exoskeletons cycles throughout the Earth’s crust and her inhabitants. Concrete, in which calcium is a primary element is ubiquitous in modern times, but lime has more endurance and better hygroscopic performance; it is better suited for above ground walls though it uses a fraction of the energy that concrete needs for processing.*

The project is the first stick frame hempcrete retrofit in North America and Bosch has been invited to share the journey of this process at the International Hemp Building Symposium in Brussels, later this month. She talks about how this type of innovation is needed to change the world we live in:

*I am not an architect. I am not a media person. Not a builder. A business. Or a*

*contractor. I’ve had to be all those things, but I am no expert at any of them. What I might call myself is a performance artist – with big props. My house is a one off.*

*So, if I can build a house out of materials that are not well understood, so can you. The reasons to do so are too compelling not to try.*

*I’ve heard, in keynote speeches and trade organization networks, that changing the world requires that we call on our innovators, that we step outside of our routines and our roles, that we see past our immediate and individual desires to our collective needs. “Urgent” that we adapt. And yet our support systems are inflexible.*

*HHH is a social experiment as much as it is a building experiment. It’s a party house. A space in a neighborhood setting that invites inquiry, scrutiny, feeling*

*the space. What’s different? How do we gather in this place? A house of hemp is mysteriously comfortable. Seashell wrapping. It must be experienced.*

Learn more about this project at <https://www.wakingtimes.com/2020/10/12/1970s-home-retrofitted-with-hempcrete-in-groundbreaking-sustainable-building-project/>

Vic Bishop is a writer for [WakingTimes.com](https://www.wakingtimes.com) and [OffgridOutpost.com](https://www.offgridoutpost.com) Survival Tips blog, an observer of people, animals, nature, and he loves to ponder the connection and relationship between them all. A believer in always striving to becoming self-sufficient and free from the matrix.

Source: <https://www.wakingtimes.com/2020/10/12/1970s-home-retrofitted-with-hempcrete-in-groundbreaking-sustainable-building-project/>

**WE TAKE CARE OF THE FUTURE BEST BY TAKING CARE OF THE PRESENT NOW.**

- Jon Kabat-Zinn -

<https://twitter.com/jonkabat-zinn/status/519195696407523328>

*Earth Regeneration*



Photos Courtesy SCOPE-KENYA

*Community members working on the nutrition garden in Karatina special school. They are uprooting weeds in a nursery bed for vegetable seedlings, spinach and broccoli.*

## Promoting Kitchen Gardening to Mitigate Impacts of Covid-19 on Food & Nutrition

By John Macharia, National Coordinator, SCOPE Kenya (Schools and Colleges Permaculture Programme)

The 12th March 2020, was a dark day for Kenyans, as the country reported the first case of Covid-19. This caught the citizens and the government off guard, as no one had the idea that the pandemic could affect Kenya, which is thousands of miles away from China, where corona virus was first reported.

Tough times followed later as the government came up with containment measures, like maintaining social distance, closing of all learning institutions, and restriction of the transport system.

As a result, many people lost their jobs and open-air markets closed, therefore accessing food among other essential re-

quirements became very challenging.

With the above measures in place, it exposed the vulnerability of our local food production and supply system. Food produced in the rural areas could not reach the market in urban areas, neither could imported food from neighboring countries get into the local market. The low supply made food prices to skyrocket far beyond the reach of middle- and low-income earners, with ripple effects on the health and immune system, especially among the elderly, young children below the age of 5 years, and to people with health conditions like diabetes and hypertension.

To keep on top of our work and contribute to mitigating the impacts of Covid-19 on food and nutrition, SCOPE Kenya initiated a Community Based Learning Programme, an intervention through

which we worked with school teachers, learners, and community members, both in rural and urban areas, to promote kitchen gardening through agro-ecology practices. This was to ensure that the target beneficiaries could change their focus from buying food from the market and instead use the available local resources to produce their own healthy food through environmentally friendly methods.

To rollout this initiative, we identified a group of nine teachers (whom we had trained earlier), school learners, and a few field trainers. The training and consultation was conducted through various social media platforms, with target beneficiaries encouraged to mobilize local resources like compost and farmyard manure.

Later, SCOPE Kenya facilitated teach-

**Gardening** *continued on next page*

*Earth Regeneration*

**Gardening** *continued from previous page*

ers, pupils, and community members to acquire quality seeds for local food and vegetables, and majorly targeting the indigenous food crops which are well adapted to the local climate.

Through this programme, small groups of learners managed to continue to work in their nutritional gardens in schools, some established their own gardens at home with teachers and field staff playing critical roles in providing technical back up.

By the end of May 2020, it was encouraging to find learners coming home with bunches of vegetables from their school gardens, individual children and families harvesting chemical-free vegetables from their small gardens, communities planting indigenous and fruit trees in schools and learners establishing their own tree nurseries at home.

A good example is Kavyuni primary school where, through the collaboration of teachers, learners, parents, and support from SCOPE Kenya, a total of over 3,000 tree seedlings were planted in their school compound, in the process of transforming the bare and degraded land into a food forest.

In Karatina Special School, teachers, support staff, and parents, through the support of SCOPE Kenya, embraced this programme. They all came together in school, to learn and establish nutritious gardens with various vegetables.

Later, we came to learn that they have adopted the gardening technologies and have been establishing their own gardens at home. Our records shows that over 100 household are now able to produce their organic food and only outsource what they cannot grow. This has reduced pressure

on families who were struggling to access food either due to inadequate supply or lack of income.

SCOPE Kenya looks forward to strengthening the kitchen gardening initiatives, so as to reach out and empower more people in the country to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on food, nutrition, income, and environment. This will change the community's mindset from seeing problems to seeing solutions, hence enabling them to tap their potential to transform problems into opportunities. This will have a sustainable solution to the prevailing social, economic, and environmental challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic.

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## Creating a Verticle Garden (left) and Three Weeks Later (right)

*Teacher Michellina (in black skirt) is training community member, Jane. They are transplanting vegetables in a vertical garden, which is suitable for urban areas or for people with small pieces of land. The leafy greens on the right are spinach leaves. Go, Popeye!!!*



*Earth Regeneration*



Photo: François Germain on Unsplash

*Producing food and caring for the planet can be hard to combine.*

## Rewilded Farmland Can Save Money – and the Earth

By Tim Radford  
Climate News Network: November 2, 2020

To save civilization, try rewilded farmland. But that salvation depends on which land goes back to forest and savannah. “The rate of biodiversity loss is unprecedented in human history, and pressures are intensifying. Earth’s living systems as a whole are being compromised.”

LONDON, UK – An international consortium of scientists has worked out – once again – how to conserve life on the planet and absorb dramatic quantities of the atmospheric carbon that is driving

potentially calamitous climate change: go for rewilded farmland, fields of crops, and livestock returned to prairie and forest. And they have identified the most cost-effective way to do it.

Global salvation requires the world’s nations to do simply what they have already undertaken to do: restore 15% of cultivated land to natural forest, grassland, shrubland, wetland, and desert ecosystems.

If such restoration happened in the highest priority zones, then almost two-thirds of the wild things now threatened with imminent extinction could survive.

And the restored wilderness that would protect them would also start absorbing atmospheric carbon at an accelerating rate: it could sequester an estimated 229 billion tons of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). This is almost a third of all the CO<sub>2</sub> spilled into the atmosphere by coal, oil, and gas combustion in the last 200 years.

All that would be possible if the world’s nations delivered on vows made 10 years ago in Japan, to restore 15% of ecosystems

worldwide. If the 196 nations that signed up went further, and restored a carefully chosen 30%, they could save more than 70% of the million or so species sliding towards extinction, and absorb 465 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, almost half of all the extra atmospheric carbon loaded into the atmosphere by human societies since the Industrial Revolution.

### Two Provisos

“Pushing forward on plans to return significant sweeps of nature to a natural state is critical to preventing ongoing biodiversity and climate crises from spinning out of control,” said Bernardo Strassburg, of the Pontifical Catholic University in Brazil, who led the study. “We show that if we’re smarter about where we restore nature, we can tick the climate, biodiversity, and budget boxes on the world’s urgent To-Do list.”

There is a catch. To be most effective, and for the lowest costs, nations would have to work together.

Right now, scientists report in the jour-

**Rewilding** *continued on next page*

## Earth Regeneration

**Rewilding** *continued from previous page*

nal *Nature*, each nation has undertaken to restore 15% of its wilderness. But to save the greatest number of species and absorb the highest levels of carbon, with the lowest cost to farmland and food security, humankind would have to assess the world as a whole, and restore those ecosystems that would serve the goals most effectively.

There is a second catch: barely a month ago, a UN report confirmed that although 196 nations agreed on 20 targets to protect biodiversity – to be achieved by 2020 – a decade ago, there has been “partial progress” in just six of them. The million species then threatened with extinction are still threatened.

### Potential Ignored

“Many good things are happening around the world and these should be celebrated and encouraged,” said Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, executive secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity. “Nevertheless the rate of biodiversity loss is unprecedented in human history, and pressures are intensifying. Earth’s living systems as a whole are being compromised.”

And that threat starts with the green things on which all life depends: in September, the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in London published a new study on ways to identify and care for the plants and fungi that underwrite survival for what could be seven million or more species alive on the planet, and more than seven billion humans.

The study, involving 210 scientists in 42 countries, said Alexandre Antonelli, director of science at the Royal Botanic Gardens, paints a picture “of a world that has turned its back on the incredible potential of plant and fungal kingdoms to address some of the biggest challenges we face...We have particularly earmarked the gaps in

our knowledge, the changes we are seeing, the species being named new to science, and the shocking pace of biodiversity loss.”

The most recent finding builds on the drive not just to fulfill the obligations undertaken 10 years ago, but to identify the very best ways to fulfill them, so as to benefit the greatest number of people.

It delivers the evidence that restoration in the most carefully chosen regions would have the most profound impact: put simply, restoration could be 13 times more cost effective if it happened in what the *Nature* researchers have identified as the highest priority locations.

They used sophisticated mathematical tools and detailed geographic data to take a closer look at the 28.7 million square kilometres (17.8 million square miles) of natural wilderness that have been converted to farmland: 54% of these were originally forest, 25% grasslands, 14% shrublands, 4% arid lands, and 2% wetlands.

They then tested these areas against three considerations: their value as habitat, their capacity for carbon storage, and their cost effectiveness. And they came up with recommendations that would deliver 91% of the potential benefit for plants and animals of the wilderness and 82% of the climate mitigation benefit, and reduce costs by 27%.

And then they considered the nation-by-nation approach: were each country to restore 15% of its own forests, the biodiversity boon fell by 28%, the climate benefits by 29%, while the costs would rise by 52%.

### Vital Partnership

They then considered the impact on the world’s food supplies, to find that 15.78 million square kilometers (nearly 10 million square miles), or 55% of wilderness converted to farmland, could be restored

without squeezing food supplies, always providing nations encouraged what they call the “sustainable intensification” of farming, along with a reduction in food waste and a move away from meat and dairy products.

The findings simply extend a procession of such outcomes by other teams. It has been a given for decades that, if forest and other ecosystems become farmland, greenhouse gas levels rise. If wilderness is restored, then the carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere will fall.

Researchers have repeatedly argued that simply planting more trees could have a dramatic impact on global heating; that a switch towards a plant-based diet could help stem biodiversity loss and reduce emissions; and that without concerted global action, precious ecosystems could collapse altogether.

They have over and over again confirmed that conservation delivers real rewards. And they have pointed out that, although nations have promised to act, such promises have not always been kept. The latest study highlights the need for action to be concerted, and global.

“These results highlight the critical importance of international co-operation in meeting these goals,” Dr. Strassburg said. “Different countries have different, complementary roles to play in meeting overarching global targets on biodiversity and climate.”

*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/rewilded-farmland-can-save-money-%e2%88%92-and-the-earth/>

**WE MAY FEEL AS WEAK AS MICE NIBBLING AT  
THE WORLD’S FETTERS. BUT WE ARE MANY.  
THE FETTERS MUST SNAP.**

- Br. David Steindl-Rast -

<https://gratefulness.org/word-for-the-day/we-may-feel-as-weak-as-mice-nibbling-at-the-worlds-fetters-but-we-are-many-the-fetters-must-snap/>



*Earth Regeneration*

# Abandon All Hopelessness, You Who Enter Here

By Maya Dutta, Research and Outreach Coordinator  
Bio4Climate: November 1, 2020

In the past few years, I've struggled with hopelessness. I think we all have our moments, but my journey with despair has been more of a slow-burning horror than a quick thrill.

I watched "An Inconvenient Truth" in 2007, at the age of 10, and it was probably the first time I'd ever heard the words 'global warming.' I remember feeling confused, indignant, energized, and so afraid. That fear made a home in my heart, morphing and metastasizing over the years, but never going away.

For a long time, I believed that someone would come along and fix this crisis. As a child, I didn't shape my dreams around the constraints of a world driven into scarcity. I dreamed of being an artist and a philosopher, of traveling the world, finding passions and people to devote myself to. But in the shadow of worsening destruction, it is hard to dream, and there is nothing more terrifying than watching disasters unfold while leaders turn a blind eye. It is a perpetual nightmare, screaming and wailing, only to find that no noise comes out.

By the time I reached young adulthood, I fed my fears much more than hopes. I started reimagining how to have a family (best not to have kids), where to settle down (try the Midwest, or maybe Canada), how to save money (is it worth putting



**Me as a Kid**

money into a retirement fund for 2060?). I tried to hope strategically, as targets moved from averting climate change to limiting it, to simply buying time on a dying planet. I watched as countries set goals for reducing emissions and staving off biodiversity losses, and failed to make any meaningful progress. All I could hear was denial of the problem, or the presumption that a silver bullet technology might come along and save us without asking that we change our systems of living. It seemed like no one was tackling the issue at its heart – our relationship to nature – and instead making shoddy and disingenuous promises.

But then I found out about regeneration and ecosystem restoration. I learned that

nature has tremendous resilience, and that people could play an instrumental part in returning the Earth to a healthy state.

Through classes and talks from Biodiversity for a Livable Climate, I learned about using microorganisms to build soil health, sequester carbon, and support the water cycle. I read up on projects to turn sites of desertification into sites of abundance, and how this work can also advance equity and empower the communities involved.

I felt like I finally found a climate strategy that is honest about the degraded systems that caused all this degraded soil, and operates with the resolve that we can do so much better! I learned that not only is it possible to reverse damage that our species has caused, but it is in fact our best bet going forward. I started to dream again for something more than survival, for a thriving and joyful vision of the future.

This is why I joined Bio4Climate, to get the message out that there is tremendous hope to be found, hope that is as real and rooted as mangroves holding fast against rising seas. In times of tumult, this is how I stay steady.

I invite you to join our community too! You can sign up for upcoming events, learn from some of the hundreds of conference and lecture videos we have online, read through our research compendium, and talk to others about Bio4Climate and our mission of eco-restoration.

In the next few weeks as we gear up for Giving Tuesday, you'll hear more from our members about why we got involved and what this work means to us. I hope our stories inspire you – and if you like, please send us a story of your own to share with our readers.

May this be an opportunity to kindle some fire against all our fears in this difficult time. You can sign up for our newsletter, attend upcoming events, learn from some of the hundreds of conference and lecture videos we have online, read through our research compendium, and talk to others about Bio4Climate and our mission of eco-restoration.

With warm wishes,  
Maya Dutta, New Member of the Bio4Climate Team

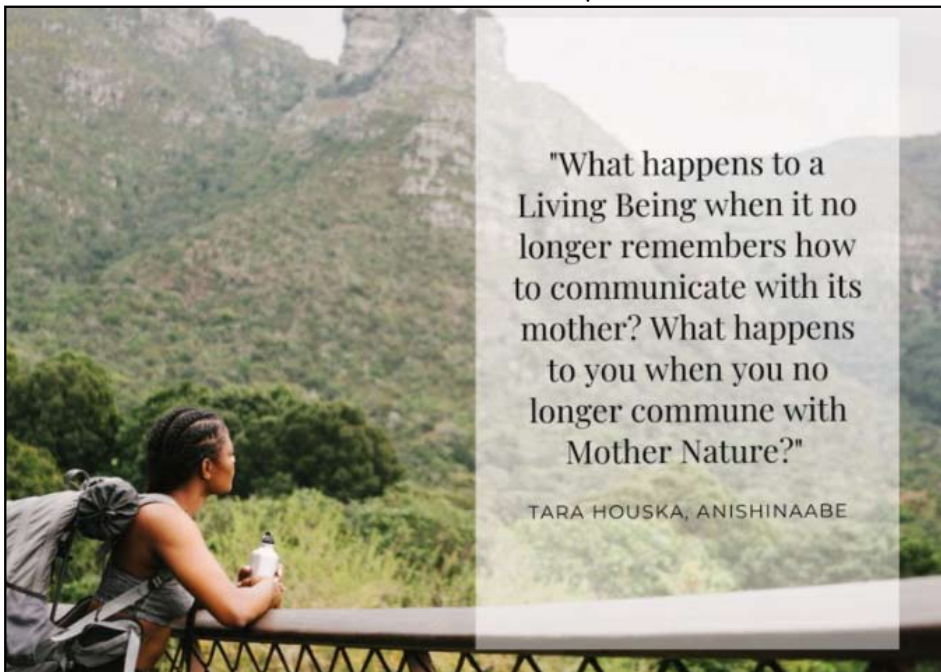
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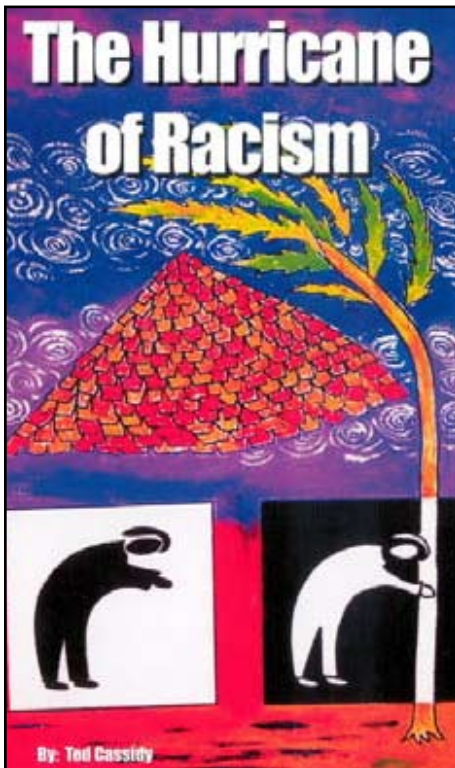


"What happens to a Living Being when it no longer remembers how to communicate with its mother? What happens to you when you no longer commune with Mother Nature?"

TARA HOUSKA, ANISHINAABE

*Ending Inequality*

# The Nature of Racism and How We Conquer It



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

## Chapter 11 Bargaining, Compromising, or Finding the Common Good in Society

**Note:** We are publishing the entire book, chapter by chapter; here are two short chapters. Even though Ted wrote *The Hurricane of Racism* 14 years ago, his knowledge is more relevant and important than ever for us in the United States today.

I found myself bargaining with the

leader of an institution when seeking to lead a staff workshop on racism. The leader was very concerned that I would incite too much emotion on the part of the large Black worker population. He asked me to interview 10 workers privately beforehand, and from the interviews people would be chosen to attend the workshop. I found myself having to give in to his demands.

Eventually, I realized that in order to have an effective workshop, I had to set up the criteria. Bargaining may be needed as part of the process to help people develop an integrated society, but I gave up too much to be effective in that circumstance.

Compromise is needed as a part of politics because we live in a world that is not ideal. However, in our efforts to become a mature society we are on a journey to racial justice. Bargaining is part of the process. However, bargaining is only a process, a method. The outcome is what is important. When we bargain to buy a car we do our best, but it is the outcome that is important.

I don't think there is an American that is not conscious of the bargaining process that one goes through regarding racism. The person of color is continually thrust into situations where he or she has to decide how to act and what to do. Does he or she compromise with the white supremacy society? It is a constant challenge.

A white person with any type of conscience is continually struggling with how to deal with race pressure in order to act with justice. I know of many young people who have gone to developing nations and come back bargaining with what to do from their experiences. A college junior who came back from working with leprosy patients at a hospital in Ecuador struggled with her new consciousness. How does

she share her experiences? What does she do with her life in the future? She is surrounded with the benefits of our culture in America and was face-to-face with people of color who are suffering with a terrible disease. What is she to do about it?

The benefit of the bargaining is to come to an understanding of what has to be accomplished. At the heart of our human life is decency and right judgment. Healthy human life results from making decisions that are not selfish. Coming to good decisions is a very demanding process. Racial problems can only be resolved in this way. It means involvement and listening to all sides. It also means becoming a person that is more integrated and willing to change institutions, especially those to which one belongs.

We need to go through the bargaining process to change these institutions. A person who is involved in this process will feel suppressed and beaten down at times and at other moments joyful at the successes. It is important that he or she is involved and struggling to overcome any manipulation and constantly looking for the healthy end result.

## Chapter 12 Resisting Depression

Depression is a state in which we feel powerless. We lose energy and drive. Depression is a prison. Insight as to what to do is not present. White people in our society are forced into a prison of continual benefit from simply being white. Black people are forced into a prison of continually being deprived of their status. Depression is the state of not having power and insight of what to do about this dysfunction.

**Racism** continued on next page

WHEN WE KNOW OURSELVES TO BE CONNECTED TO ALL OTHERS,  
ACTING COMPASSIONATELY IS SIMPLY THE NATURAL THING TO DO.

- Rachel Naomi Remen -

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/96953-when-we-know-ourselves-to-be-connected-to-all-others>

*Ending Inequality*

# Thanks to you, 84 Children Accessed Education Last Year

By Ngo Banfogha, Hope for a Better Future, Cameroon

It's soon to be back to school and we are trying to raise funds to keep the children in school. Her name is Diana, she dreams to be a fashion designer when she grows up. We hope she stays in school to be able to achieve her dreams and also take care of her younger ones.

Diana is 11 years old and displaced from the Nso, a community in the northwest region of Cameroon. Her dad was shot by the military and their home burned. They lost everything. She is with her mum surviving on the mercies of the host community members. There are many like her or even worse situations. There are no signs of the crisis ending soon. It keeps getting worse by the day.

Our micro-enterprise project is highly needed for single mums like Diana's mother but with limited fundings we could only help a few. It's been two years since we launched our scholarship program and it benefits vulnerable displaced or underprivileged children age 8 - 17. We have been able to provide scholarships to over 154 children.

When the first batch graduates from secondary school, we will develop another project into seeing them into universities and helping them secure jobs or provide livelihood support via our micro-enterprise program.

It's our call and decision to serve, so we keep trying. There will



Diana

be a time we able to get all the help we need to help others. So we remain hopeful and don't break.

**Contact Ngo Banfogha:**

**Email:** ngoitsnalb@gmail.com.

**Donate:** <https://www.givingway.com/donate/hope-for-a-better-future>

## **Racism** *continued from previous page*

White cultures have lost so much of the roots that enable individuals to celebrate and become strong differentiated persons. People of color in many areas of the country have been robbed of their church and other community support groups.

A retired white teacher who has taught for years in the inner city public schools of Philadelphia conveyed that the people in the area where he lives, North Philadelphia, exist in terrible dysfunction. They do not lack enough food to eat, but they are in a chronic state of inability to face the realities of daily life. Their lifestyle has become such that it is stabilized into a common sharing of depression. This teacher adopted a Black boy who is so hooked on drugs that his father has to keep the door of his house locked so that his drug addicted son does not steal his possessions. This is serious depression.

On the other hand, I know of white families that are depressed in the opposite path. They live so far away from the problems of inner city and rural America that they have no insight as to what their sharing in the power, benefits, and accumulation of wealth does to the poor. They not only suffer from denial, they suffer from a depression, a social state of not be-

ing who they can be. Anyone with wealth can either use it to become someone who can relate and share with others, or live in a depressed state where insight and creativity are not operative.

Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, a theologian, demonstrates that present United States consciousness is based on the maximization of profits.<sup>41</sup> Our system and our consciousness benefit the few. Two-thirds of the world's goods are used by the United States. We effectively exclude from our consciousness "those" people who are different. Although there are many in the USA who can resist this consciousness, she says that the desire for maximizing profits dominates. This way of thinking prevents us from bringing to mind the needs and suffering of others.

She shows that we need to reinvent our way of thinking. She says that we have a thinking problem, an epistemological problem. Our system does not think in a way that considers most of the rest of the world. We need to become aware of and take responsibility for our way of thinking. This means that we do not allow a type of depression that prevents us from understanding reality.

I have met a number of people who

consciously want to do this – to understand reality and make appropriate changes. However, a number of them have become depressed. There are teachers, wanting to help students who have been deprived, who live in inner-city areas, earn lower wages, and sacrifice with their families what many others have. Year after year these teachers are surrounded by a wider culture that is thinking differently. Their depression sometimes becomes so strong that they are not able to operate well and their situation becomes worse.

Depression is a stage that we may have to experience, an inevitable consequence of feeling helpless. It is also a trap that can keep us ensnared by forces that appear to dominate. In racial matters we seek to understand when a depression makes us feel powerless. We seek not to be overcome by these negative forces but rather discern our own power and resources.

### **Footnote:**

<sup>41</sup> Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, *Mujerista Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1996).

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

*Ending Inequality*



Photo: Thomson Reuters Foundation/Handout by Roots Africa

*Roots Africa volunteers stand for a photo with buckets used to promote hand washing in Bindura, Zimbabwe on July 20, 2020.*

## African Activists Fight Violence Against Women One Law at a Time

By Kim Harrisberg

Thomson Reuters Foundation: August 4, 2020

In southern Africa, female activists are pushing for legal and societal change to protect women from domestic abuse.

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa – As a young girl growing up in northern Zimbabwe's mining community of Mashonaland, Beatrice Savadye watched as her friends were forced into child marriages and early motherhood while many became sick with HIV.

Wanting a different life for herself and other girls, Savadye started the Zimbabwean women's movement Roots Africa seven years ago fighting for, among many things, legislation change to better protect

women's rights in her region.

Under the lockdown, Savadye is one of a band of female activists in Africa pushing for stronger laws to protect women trapped indoors with abusers from a surge in violence, and also a spike in HIV infections.

"I don't like seeing injustice. We work to build resilience among young girls, to say that even if you are poor, you can have a better life," said Savadye, 33, while driving through Bindura, a town in Mashonaland.

The United Nations in June warned of a surge in domestic violence under coronavirus lockdowns, with calls to helplines doubling or tripling in some countries, as restrictions on movement made it impossible for many women to flee abusers.

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) highlighted the risk of domestic violence and HIV infection for women and girls in sub-Saharan

Africa, who already accounted for 59% of new HIV infections in the region in 2019.

While providing training, rescuing women from abusive homes in her own car, sheltering 30 women and their children, and assisting them with antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to prevent full-blown AIDS, Savadye is also pushing for legal changes.

"It is painful to become an adult at a young age. Young girls need role models to look up to, safe spaces to run to, and laws to protect them," said Savadye.

### Justice

In 2016 Roots Africa helped push for a constitutional court judgment that led to a ban of child marriage in Zimbabwe.

Savadye meets regularly with traditional leaders to make sure this legal protection translates into reality, particularly during

**Activists** *continued on next page*

*Ending Inequality*

## Trash for Cash: South Africans Fight Hunger with Digital Currency from Recycling

Over in Johannesburg, a recycling project in a rundown neighborhood is cleaning up the streets while helping to feed thousands of people.

Run through a local charity, the project gives recyclers a card with a unique barcode that is used to load their recycling points. They spend the points at a weekly “Swap Shop” on essentials like beans, soups, and rice.

“I didn’t used to like recycling, but this taught us how to fish so we can feed ourselves,” refugee Mimi Ngalula told our South Africa correspondent Kim Harrisberg.

Read full story at <https://news.trust.org/item/20201109100858-opuvf/>



Photo: Thomson Reuters Foundation/Kim Harrisberg

*A group of volunteers pose for a photo behind a table of donated food products in the Johannesburg suburb of Lorentzville, South Africa. October 23, 2020.*

### Activists *continued from previous page*

the pandemic.

“We have seen an increase in child marriages during the lockdown as economic meltdown is one of the key drivers of child marriage and exploitation,” Savadye told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

She is now pushing for a review of the Zimbabwean Termination of Pregnancy Act to fully legalize abortion.

Currently it is only legal if the mother or child’s health is at risk or the mother can prove she was raped, said Savadye.

“We are fighting against backstreet abortions,” she said, adding that she also has to help women access ARV medication secretly so that controlling partners in denial of their status won’t banish them from taking the pills. Across the border from Zimbabwe, Roots Africa’s efforts are echoed by the South African women’s rights charity Ilitha Labantu, that means bringing a sunbeam of hope to the people in a local isiXhosa language.

“Violence against women has been a pandemic for a long time,” said the charity’s director, Ella Mangisa, 37.

“We fight against the normalization of gender-based violence,” she said from her office in Gugulethu, a township in South Africa’s Western Cape province.

Founded in 1989, Ilitha Labantu shelters abused women, provides them with skills, and uses educational workshops to teach

school and university students about consent, sexual violence, and communication.

During the lockdown, the organization saw a spike in women fleeing abusive partners.

“The Domestic Violence Act says a woman should be offered a place of safety if she is abused. But why must she run around like a headless chicken looking for this safety?” Mangisa asked. “The perpetrator should be removed from the house, not the other way around,” she said, adding her organization submitted a suggested amendment for the act to government during lockdown.

“Laws and how they are enacted will better help women access justice,” Mangisa said.

### Dream

Further east in southern Africa, 25-year-old Malawian activist Grace Ngulube has used her own experience of being born with HIV to educate and help women at risk of getting the virus.

“I faced many challenges such as stigma and denial. Little by little I became more confident to help others,” said Ngulube from her home in the city of Blantyre.

Ngulube’s organization, the National Association of Young People Living with HIV, organized support groups before the pandemic hit for youth living with HIV, educating them on their health rights and

assisting them with accessing medication.

But when schools closed and movement was restricted, Ngulube heard reports of a rise in sexual violence against women and girls as well as teenage pregnancies.

Using WhatsApp to stay in touch with as many girls as she could, Ngulube also began meeting community leaders to ensure child marriages did not occur, even though they are illegal.

“There are laws, but we are pushing for them to be enforced,” she said, adding that young girls with HIV were stigmatized for having low immune systems and labelled as potential corona carriers.

“This is why we need civic education,” Ngulube said.

But Savadye in Zimbabwe said she was concerned education campaigns ran the risk of being drowned out by Covid-19.

“With all efforts focused on fighting the coronavirus, we cannot forget about HIV, malaria, child marriages, and gender-based violence,” said Savadye, who often takes her 3-year-old son to her awareness workshops.

“I want him to be an ally to women one day, in a society where men and women can thrive with dignity. Whatever work we do now contributes to that dream.”

Source: <https://news.trust.org/item/20200804001215-hf5nc/>

*Human Interest*



Photos Courtesy A.S.E.

(left to right) Just a few of the items made from recycled or repurposed items in The Democratic Republic of the Congo – cobblestones from plastic waste, shoes from dead animals, furniture from old tires.

## DR Congo Group Has Major Recycling Projects to Help Combat Enormous Waste Problem

By Prince Kitumaini Kamundala, DR Congo

### WASTE AND RECYCLE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Here in Africa in general and especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, people suffer with the problem of waste; people do not respect the environment and the surrounding living and inert beings.

Cleanliness is the basis of all healthy human life but the presence of rubbish, rubbish, and more rubbish in neighborhoods, avenues, roads, and public parking, constitutes an acute danger. When we visit certain public places, we find ourselves in deposits of waste; these deposits are raised up like mountains, close to water channels, etc. This waste can be the origin of several contagious diseases such as cholera, typhoid fever, amebiasis, etc.

Certain persons, street children, and orphans, for lack of food, come to stock up in this deposit which promotes the dissemination of microbes and the spread of disease by the dispersion of waste. We could avoid the problem if everyone would use trash cans.

We are witnessing despicable practices such as throwing rubbish in the avenues,

streets, and gutters. The results of the surveys carried out throughout the Congo, proved that people do not have proper places to deposit waste, so deposit it in the streets and in front of their neighbors' fences. Eighty of the 5,000 people surveyed noted that the problem of waste requires a lasting solution to relieve the population from these diseases. The situation is even worse in the markets and factories, which pile up wastes without considering the consequences for their removal.

This project is purely social and community-oriented because it aims to clean all the areas of the country and also fight against contagious diseases so the population will have a healthy environment, promote cleanliness in the country, and safeguard the environment in order to save human lives, fight against contagious diseases, avoid erosion due to waste being thrown in waterways, avoid blockage of channels, change the image of the country, attract visitors, etc.

As part of the fight against global warming caused by mismanagement of the environment, we have been looking for ways to find solutions to help the population since 2009 – especially women, girls, and young boys – by creating sanitation and recycling

jobs and making the city clean again.

#### What we do with waste:

- **Plastic waste:** We make cobblestones, bricks, pebbles, stones, tars, houses, etc.
- **Green waste or agricultural waste:** We manufacture charcoal, briquettes, embers, etc.
- **Food, agricultural, and toilet waste:** We make compost and seeds for cultivators, etc.
- **Bone waste:** We feed animals, cattle, fish, etc.
- **Metal and iron waste:** We manufacture improved stoves, ovens, lamps, etc.
- **Tire waste from vehicles:** We manufacture chairs, tables, lamps, bouquets of flowers, children's play items, shoes, etc.
- **Used clothes and shoes:** We manufacture rugs, pavers, etc.
- **Bodies of cows:** We create shoes, etc.

After a long and painful experience following the lack of tools, we decided to seek funds to help us achieve our objectives and improve our work because we have a lot of difficulty finding the means to build a place for waste recycling and treatment here in DR Congo.

**Recycling** *continued on next page*

*Human Interest*

Recycling continued from previous page



*Women watching and learning as cobblestones are being made from waste in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.*

**Our objectives are:**

- Purchase land for the works
- Purchase vehicles for works
- Purchase work clothes
- Administrative and office expenses
- Construct ovens, feed, and animal feed
- Purchase machines for recycling waste
- Purchase machines for recycling metal and iron waste
- Purchase machines for recycling plastic pavements
- Purchase machines for recycling green

waste into embers

- Purchase machines to recycle waste into grain

We ask people of goodwill to help us with our objectives so that we can help the people who suffer.

Thank you for your support  
Together for a better world.

**Contact Prince Kitumaini Kamundala, founder of Action for Environment Care and Business and Ecosysteme Management as follows.**

**Email:** [princekitumaini@gmail.com](mailto:princekitumaini@gmail.com)

**Address:** Democratic Republic of the Congo, Africa, Province of South Kivu, town Bukavu,

**WhatsApp:** +243892435588,  
+243974595199,

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

**LinkedIn:** Prince Kitumaini Kamundala



*Human Interest*



Photo: Max Pixel

*To protect nature, our law should be based on interconnection.*

## The Law of Nature

By Alex May  
*The Ecologist*: October 15, 2020

Nature is being destroyed, and in turn, human survival is threatened. The optimism of the first decade of this millennium is gone, replaced by a broad recognition by scientists and public alike of the perilous situation we are in.

This situation calls for a radical response – which should include transforming our legal system so that protecting Nature is at the core instead of the periphery.

The most recent UN Report on biodiversity, the Global Biodiversity Outlook 5, has sounded the alarm loudly and clearly.

### Rhetoric

The Report is an update on 20 biodiversity targets which were agreed to internationally by states in 2010. Not one of the targets was fully achieved; only 6 of the 20 were partially achieved; and 14 of them were failed. The warning from the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Bio-

logical Diversity, who published the report, is clear. “Earth’s living systems as a whole are being compromised. And the more humanity exploits Nature in unsustainable ways and undermines its contributions to people, the more we undermine our own wellbeing, security, and prosperity.”

This is a similar warning to the one given by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in their 2018 report, in which they were clear that radical action was needed to reduce carbon emissions by about 50 percent by 2030 and called for “rapid and far-reaching transitions.”

Although Boris Johnson recently committed to protect 30 percent of the UK’s land by 2030, as part of the ‘Leaders Pledge for Nature,’ this is empty rhetoric, obviously so given the failure over the last decade.

As the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) describes, “The government creates an impression of taking this stuff seriously but as soon as you dig down into the action that’s just not reflected.”

### Atomized

We know that radical change is needed to avoid catastrophe, and it is vital that we think about this in terms of system change. Relying on each person to doing their bit, in a political framework based on individual responsibility, has failed, and we must change the systems that we all act within.

For the most part, we know what sort of change is required in terms of social change, political change, and economic change, with reports, targets, frameworks, and new systemic approaches proposed. But law as a system has been, for the most part, overlooked.

Our legal system is an interwoven part of our society and our economy. It structures human activity and social relations, and it affects how we understand ourselves and the world.

For example, the way law focuses on individual rights reproduces our individualistic conception of society and the way

**Law of Nature** *continued on next page*



## Human Interest

### Law of Nature *continued from previous page*

we think of freedom as individual entitlement without responsibility. Yet despite this role law plays, it has mostly faded into the background, seen as a neutral and technical social system instead of a powerful influence in our way of life that itself must be changed.

Humans are interconnected with each other and with the natural world. Yet our society, economic models, and legal systems do not recognize this, seeing us instead as atomized individuals.

### Harmonious

In our legal systems, individual (and corporate) rights are the primary building block, and when we think about freedom, it is individual freedom that we think about. This is mistaken: in our interconnected world, individuals live in a dense network of relations and relationships. Society is not an aggregation of individuals, but a dense, interwoven web.

Our legal system is based in this flawed individualistic model, seeing us as separate from each other and from the natural world. Instead, it must shift to a paradigm based on interconnection, recognizing and working to change the network of relationships we live in.

The network of relationships which make up our society can be empowering and sustaining, or they can be harmful and destructive. They can create conditions of freedom and allow us to live fulfilling and sustainable lives, or they can smother, abuse, and exploit us. Law, as part of this, can be used to oppress people or to liberate them.

Once we recognize this, we should see that law's role should be to transform this web of relationships – social, economic, and ecological relationships – from harmful to harmonious.

The argument is not that law should be used to influence these relationships, nor is it that law is the only way we should do this.

### Life

Instead, the point is that law already influences all sorts of relationships in society, and that our legal system itself must be transformed as part of the broader social and political change that is needed.

Earth Jurisprudence points to the way that the relationship between humans and the rest of Nature is currently mediated by law. In our legal systems, Nature features chiefly as property which can be owned, dominated, and plundered by human owners.

Individuals and corporate actors are free to destroy ecosystems and cause ecological harm in their search of profit. Environmental law is secondary, almost an afterthought. Instead, protecting Nature should be the norm, not the exception, and sustainability should be a core principle across our entire legal system.

Earth Jurisprudence proposes a transformation of legal systems to address this: to make Nature an equal part of our legal system by granting it rights. This would give Nature the ability to protect itself, via human intermediaries.

Recognizing Nature's rights in our legal system would also help us to see Nature as valuable in its own right, instead of just as a resource for us to use. It would also embed in our culture the idea that we are part of a community of life on this Earth, instead of that our environment is some 'other' which we are separate from and more important than.

### Personhood

Legal transformation has been mostly overlooked in the last decade, with one exception: the idea of ecocide.

The Stop Ecocide campaign seeks to make the destruction of Nature an international crime. This call has been picked up by the Extinction Rebellion movement

and mentioned by youth climate strikers as part of the change they call for. Making ecocide a crime is certainly welcome, but the transformation that our legal system needs is far bigger, and it is a shame that ideas like Rights of Nature have not yet received broader recognition.

Legal Rights of Nature have been introduced in some places around the world. They are recognized in Ecuador's constitution, which will soon be before the court in a legal challenge seeking to protect a nature reserve from mining permits.

In New Zealand, a particular river system was given legal personhood, and in Colombia and India courts have developed rights for particular ecosystems.

### Transform

Rights of Nature is only one part of the transformation of law that we need. The idea of interconnection can be the core of this framework, helping us to see the broader shift that is needed.

Our law should shift to looking at relationships, such as between humans and their ecosystems, instead of just being about individual rights and rights-claims. It has the potential to help change how we relate to each other, seeing ourselves collectively instead of individually.

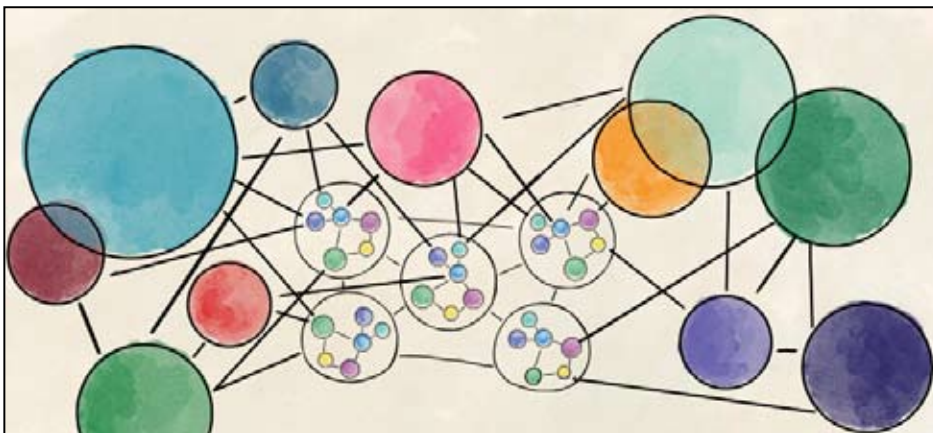
We could also see the role of law as being about transforming the network of relationships that make up our society, instead of being about protecting individual rights and individual freedoms. In this view, law could be used to transform social relations which are unjust or exploitative to being just, harmonious, and empowering.

The Interconnected Law Project seeks to develop these ideas and, ultimately, to transform our legal systems as part of the broader political and social change that we need.

If you would like to discuss these ideas further, join the mailing list, or make any contribution to realizing this idea, please do get in touch at [alex@alexmay.co.uk](mailto:alex@alexmay.co.uk).

*Alex May is the founder of the Interconnected Law Project which seeks to develop and share ideas about law and ultimately transform our legal systems. If you are interested in discussing the ideas further, working or partnering with us, or helping fund the project, please get in touch – you can find us at [www.interconnectedlaw.com](http://www.interconnectedlaw.com) or @Intercon-Law on Twitter.*

**Source:** <https://theecologist.org/2020/oct/15/law-nature>



*Human Interest*



Photos: Thomson Reuters Foundation/Handout by Julie Wambui

(above) Safe Hands Kenya staff install hand-washing stations in the Dandora informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya. July 2020.

(insert) Safe Hands Kenya staff member adjusts a girl's face mask in Nairobi, Kenya. July 2020.

## Covid-Proofing Slums Upended Kenya's Business Culture

By Tom Finn, *excerpt*

Thomson Reuters Foundation: November 11, 2020

Half a million reusable masks, 123 tons of soap, and 1,750 hand-washing stations. These numbers are music to the ears of business consultant James Irungu Mwangi – telling the story of the efforts he led to protect Kenyan slum-dwellers from Covid-19.

They also show how socially minded businesses can thrive in times of crisis, said Mwangi, who for years has urged African firms to look beyond profit and tackle issues like poverty and climate change by working with governments and non-profits.

The coronavirus pandemic has driven many firms to do just that, he said, describing the health crisis as an opportunity for companies to reassess their priorities.

“Businesses used to write a cheque to make a problem go away,” said Mwangi, executive director of the Dalberg Group and a partner with Dalberg Advisors. “Now they realize if they don’t respond – help people fight the disease, preserve the planet – they won’t exist next quarter,” said Mwangi...

When the outbreak hit Africa in March, many feared the disease would tear through the continent’s packed slums and overwhelm fragile health systems.

Mwangi marshaled Kenyan companies, NGOs, community groups, and govern-

ment bodies – players that rarely worked together but now had a common goal – in confronting the pandemic.

Out of the collaboration came Safe Hands Kenya, a campaign to supply vulnerable Kenyans, many living in Nairobi’s slums, with soap, masks, and hand-washing stations manufactured locally to protect jobs. “We launched in crisis mode,” he said. “Digital retailers, soap manufacturers, media companies, and grassroots groups from informal settlements all piled in and asked ‘what can we do?’”

Mwangi convinced rival companies to share the locations of thousands of roadside stores in Nairobi where free hand-washing stations were installed.

The Safe Hands team mapped out kiosks across the city to identify neighborhoods cut off from sanitation. “It was a brutal death march of very late nights and some (of the companies) fought like cats and dogs. But it was this huge systemic shock of the pandemic that ultimately shifted mindsets,” he said.

### ‘Virtuous Circle’

Safe Hands Kenya has provided more than 1.5 million Kenyans with access to hand-washing facilities and reached a further 3 million through a social media campaign – Tiba Ni Sisi or “We Are The

Cure,” which encouraged social distancing.

Fewer people have died of Covid-19 in Africa than initially feared, and the continent has registered roughly 35,000 deaths and 1.4 million confirmed cases, according to Reuters data. Experts say some Covid-19 deaths are probably going unregistered, but that expertise in epidemic control from tackling other outbreaks as well as outdoor living and lower rates of travel could be helping Africa fare better....

Mobile apps that transmit agricultural prices and weather forecasts to farmers are being used to send out messages on how to avoid contagion by Covid-19....

In South Africa, the government is working with the private sector to manufacture 10,000 ventilators, while garment factories in Kenya and Ghana have switched to making masks and protective clothing.

“There is a funding drought coming in 2021 and its going to be Darwinian. Social businesses can’t just say, ‘I’m saving one village.’ They must have a way to scale-up, to set off a ‘virtuous cycle,’” he said...

“The big, bad consequences of the future are no longer decades away. They’re not our children’s problems, they have become ours.”

Source: <https://news.trust.org/item/20201111040532-b0gfo/>

THE PATH FORWARD MAY SOMETIMES BE UNCLEAR. AND IT  
MAY BE MESSY. BUT THE SHARED HEART IS  
CALLING, AND WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE LASTING  
SHIFTS TOWARD LOVE AND JUSTICE IN OUR WORLD.

- Kristi Nelson -

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/678636237595289954/>

# 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](mailto: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

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*Thank you.*



*Remember your dreams.*



## Messages from Our Friends

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



Hi Iona:

It sounds like you are keeping yourself more than busy. I just wanted to let you know that it looks as though my PC has come through its rehab all right – and is doing the better for it. At least so far! I also wanted to ask if you knew anything about this new series on the environment (“The Age of Nature”) which has just started on PBS. PBS aired its first episode (“Awakening”) last night.

Its basic theme seems to be that Nature is a powerful force – and that if we allow ourselves to work with it – it can help rehabilitate us from many of the problems besetting us. So, its title means that we are entering “the Age of Nature” with a new set of beliefs and understandings.

It looks at sample problems around the world, such as the overfishing of cod off the coast of Norway, resuscitating a large nature park in Mozambique that was largely destroyed by warfare in the 70’s, and re-imagining a totally ruined landscape in the highlands of China. In each case, scientists have diagnosed the problem, but then have set out to work with elected officials and community members to actually solve the problem.

So, it’s very interesting. There is some very good photography and excellent narrative. If you get a chance to look at it, I’d like to know what you think.

With hopes that you are doing well.

**Dan Adams**, Pennsylvania USA

Hi Iona,

Both Linda & I are praying that you are in good health. It’s so good reading your news reports. Please take good care of yourself.

**Ron & Linda Feagley**, Pennsylvania USA

Your paper is so well done, and achieving its goals. I will contribute as time goes by but may try to get an ad in next issue. God bless you in your work, especially the ballot counting. What a job!

**Christine Maccabee**, Maryland USA

Thanks for the updates. I enjoy reading these amazing stories.

**Hanson Gonsia Blayon**, Liberia

This is wonderful, great work Iona. We really do appreciate the work you’re doing. Regards,

**Jussa Kudherezera**, Senior Coordinator  
Manica Youth Assembly (MAYA)  
Zimbabwe

Beryl Akoth who is 18 years old and a third born in a family of six. Evelyne Achieng is a mother to Beryl Akoth. They reside at Mathare slum in Nairobi.

It’s the joy of each parent to provide for her family and make sure their children are comfortable like other children out there.

She started a small business of selling vegetables at Eastleigh area in Nairobi which supported the family till corona virus came earlier this year which has affected each one of us.

As a family they began to encounter challenges which affected Beryl’s education. After Beryl Akoth completed her high school level she passed her exams and was called to join university of Eldoret (Eldoret is 327 kilometers, or 213 miles, from Nairobi) to study a degree in business management as an accountant.

The desire of her heart is to complete her studies and be of great support to her family and the community as a whole.

Women and girls from informal settlements go through so many challenges! To see Beryl complete her studies and focus on her future has a great impact to the community and great achievement both to the family and the community.

Due to corona virus the mum was unable to pay for her stall rent in Eastleigh where she used to sell the vegetables and was forced to stay at home after the stall was closed down.

She had to also take care of her second born disabled son who was studying at Joytown secondary boarding school and currently is at home since the schools are closed and kids are at home.

With all these challenges the family is unable to raise \$340 (ksh 34,000 – Kenya shillings equal to 0.01 USD) which was to be paid annually for Beryl’s studies and as a family they are calling upon well-wishers, sponsors, friends, family, and anyone who could be of help to support Beryl’s studies since she is supposed to report in November 2020.

It’s with great humility as a green world organization, that I thought of sharing this story with the world.

**Alfred Akeyo**, Kenya  
gworldcommunity2013@gmail.com

Thank you for this valuable information.  
**Samuel Mirindi**, Burundi, ReWinO

Thanks for shearing this wonderful piece with insightful stories.

I would like to share that this journal will support to numerous climate activists at global level as most of the people want different strategies regarding it and I hope those whom are really in need that will definitely cater by this journal.

Thanks and regards,  
**Akhter Hussain**, India

Hi Iona!

Thank you for *Groundswell News Journal* #68, October 18, 2020: Page 32 .

I loved to read myself.

I forwarded your message to Joaquim Manuel Mota. He is my Geography colleague. Maybe you would like to contact him yourself. He is being shy. I told him I would back him up. He is good at what he does.

Cheers,

**Filomena Novais**, Portugal

P.S. One of my eldest brothers was a Jesuit. He got married, too. He died in May 2015.

Dear Iona,

Good morning.

Thank you for this communication and consideration for the opportunity to tell our story. I am going to put up a story and share with you before the end of this week.

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As a Country Representative, I will continue to support this initiative and spread the newsletter far and wide, to benefit many people.

Regards,  
**John Machaira**, Kenya

I hope you're doing well, my dear one with me here I'm OK, and all my little ones are fine, but I'm here to tell you that I have never failed, but now I'm in something so difficult my friend. I have nothing really to feed my children, they're almost sleeping hungry. I have never told you this in life.

I have been struggling but now I'm losing hope, my sister, put me and my orphan children in prayers. I'm sending you this message in much pain. I can't hide this to you because I always tell you all about myself. I always share with you but I have never met this challenge. The children now have no clothes or shoes. I'm really in bad time. I thank God I haven't got a regretting heart.

Love you sister Iona,  
**Lillian Kabahuma**, Uganda

kabahumalillian80@gmail.com

Hello gentlemen, madam,

We are a non-profit organization called Action for the Preservation of the Environment (A.S.E).

We come to you to ask 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 stove, fishing, breeding, fish farming, beekeeping, etc.

The accident has occurred and our truck cannot be repaired; there is no way to buy other vehicles. Our truck helps us with community work and was a donation from Miva Switzerland and LHL Germany.

For this reason, we ask people of 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 our main actor in our projects.

There were no injuries from the accident when he transported waste to the households to the depot. The problem was with

braking; no other vehicles were involved.

Thank you in advance for your help. May God bless you. The details of these projects cited above are with us, you can consult them or have a copy. Also see pages 22 and 23.

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!!

Together for a better world.

Please contact the author for details on how to get donations to him for his organization's great work.

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