

## A Voice from Honduras Cries Out for a Better Future

Last year, thousands gathered in New York City for the People’s Climate Justice Summit. Crowds swelled with energized, committed people, ready for action.

One of those people was Miriam Miranda, whose words rang out over the murmuring masses:

“What responsibility are we assuming with our future generations?”

With a strong, clear voice, Miriam – a leader with Grassroots partner the Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras (OFRANEH) – cried out for collective action:

“The planet is collapsing, and the time has come to act. We act NOW.”

Miriam and OFRANEH see the urgency every day in their work with the Afro-indigenous Garifuna community. The Garifuna are an agrarian people whose livelihood includes fishing and subsistence farming. But their way of life, their very survival, is now in jeopardy.

Lured by the promise of profits from the production of agrofuels – and the development of tourism – the Honduran government and private enterprise are working together to try to force the Garifuna off their coastal lands.

But OFRANEH is rising up to protect their communities and the earth – and their success earned them the 2015 Food Sovereignty

Prize from the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance. This award honors work toward health, ecology, and community control in food systems.

By developing leaders, organizing the community, and educating people on legal strategy, OFRANEH is organizing Garifuna communities to protect their land and build a secure foundation for tomorrow.

And the call by Miriam – and the vision of OFRANEH – doesn’t stop at tomorrow. They’re thinking generations down the line.

“We should and must have the obligation to leave water, air, food, and secure the safety for our sons and daughters.”

Through Grassroots International, you join hands with people like Miriam and organizations like OFRANEH – helping to protect people’s rights, and the planet. ■



*The Planet is collapsing, and the time has come to act!*

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# Art and Empowerment During Climate Justice Alliance's Summer of Our Power

Quilts are surprisingly symbolic objects. They represent warmth, safety, and security – the very things at stake in the fight for climate justice.

But they also represent what's at the core of climate justice: creativity and cooperation.



*Supporter Peggy Newell contributed a quilt panel*

This summer the Climate Justice Alliance (CJA) launched the Summer of Our Power Campaign to mobilize communities to take creative action to secure climate justice.

The program began on the summer solstice to emphasize the interconnected relationship between people and the earth.

The movement featured a variety of creative expressions, but the heart of the campaign was the quilt relay. Grassroots International, a CJA member, joined other organizations and individuals in frontline communities as each contributed a quilt square which expressed their hopes and visions for justice and harmony with the land.

Grassroots International supporter Peggy Newell (pictured above) contributed a quilt panel that included representations of global partners from Haiti, Brazil, Mesoamerica and Palestine as well as the global affirmation that “Small farmers cool the planet.”

Grassroots invited Juslene Tyresias from our partner the Peasant Movement of Papaye (MPP) in Haiti to come to New Orleans during events around the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, along with the CJA and Gulf South Rising. Juslene contributed a quilt square from the MPP, and called for solidarity, drawing comparisons between recovery efforts in Haiti and New Orleans. Devastation from climate problems are global, she said, so the solutions must be global too.

A quilt is an artistic representation of the powerful work front-line climate activists do every day. And it expresses how different movements, organizations and nations can join

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## From the Executive Director

In this newsletter, you'll read about what Grassroots International's partners are doing to respond to climate change. Our partners are among those experiencing the most serious impacts of climate change, from devastating droughts, to unprecedented floods, to increasingly severe storms, and more. At the same time, they are creating some of the best solutions to both build community resilience in the face of these impacts, and to address the root causes of climate disruption.

As corporate interests continue to seek profit from extraction, land grabs and privatization of natural resources, it is an honor to accompany social movements that are at the forefront of struggles defending land, territory, water, seeds - and the planet as a whole.

Climate justice solutions also require building connections between these organizing and movement-building efforts, across different geographies. One of Grassroots International's main emphases through our US advocacy is to facilitate connections between frontline community organizing groups working to build a movement for climate justice within both the US and internationally.

Over the past few months:

- Grassroots International supported US organizers to participate in a learning exchange in Brazil, hosted by our partner the Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB). This exchange is part of a multi-year strategy that MAB has developed to build closer connections with US groups working for water rights and energy sovereignty.
- We organized a visit of our Haitian partner Juslene Tyresias, from the Peasant Movement of Papaye (MPP), to the US to be part of the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina commemoration events. (Read more in the newsletter.)
- We facilitated a connection between our partner the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) in Palestine and the US-based Climate Justice Alliance. Representatives from the Black Mesa Water Coalition in Arizona and the Asian Pacific Environmental Network in California are traveling to Palestine to share their experiences in working towards a “Just Transition,” and will build deeper solidarity between Palestinian struggles and those of frontline-impacted communities in the US.
- We are collaborating with Grassroots Global Justice Alliance (GGJ) to ensure a strong and diverse delegation of US and international community leaders to the mobilizations during the UN climate negotiations in Paris later this year.

There is so much we are learning from each of these experiences, along with our partners and US allies. We feel the gravity of just how high the stakes are, and yet we also feel a great sense of joy and possibility as we strengthen our commitment to walking this path with each of them, and with you as part of our family and community.

In gratitude and solidarity,  
Chung-Wha Hong

# Palestinian Farmers Push for Control of Water

Water is life. Unfortunately, it is increasingly used as a weapon. And it can be a deadly one when political conflict meets drought.

For decades the Israeli government has had varying degrees of legal and coercive control over the Palestinian water supply. Eighty-five percent of Palestinian water resources are controlled by Israelis and all too often, wells and other agricultural projects are demolished or confiscated.

The result is a gaping inequity: Israelis have swimming pools, and Palestinians can barely survive.

The average Israeli uses 300 liters of water per day, but Palestinians are limited by bureaucracy and lack of access to 30-70 liters – and the World Health Organization recommends a minimum 100 liters per day.

But Palestinian communities and farmers continue to work for control of their own resources, for the right to life-sustaining water – on their own terms. And they're far from alone. For example, our partner the Union of Agricultural Work Committees has drilled over 357

agricultural wells, established four concrete earthen ponds for harvesting water, built four new water tanks to irrigate crops and linked communities and farmland with over 38 miles of pipes.

Water is essential to life, yet more and more communities are being stripped of their water rights every day. From Brazil to Palestine to India to the US, water resources are being privatized and sold off to the highest bidder while communities are left thirsty and unable to maintain their crops. And governments, fueled by greed (or desperation), are failing to protect these vital resources.

Fortunately, your support for Grassroots International is supporting communities as they come together to protect their common resources and demand their human right to water. From Palestine to Haiti to the Amazon, Grassroots partners continue to work to defend the resources they need to thrive and survive.

Thank you for standing with us to advance a principle at the very heart of climate justice: rights to land, water, and food for all. ■



## Art and Empowerment...

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together to form one garment of coordinated purpose.

When joining hands with Grassroots International, you stand beside individuals working in their own communities to weave a colorful piece of the future that the Climate Justice Alliance envisions: a fair society that honors diversity and protects the health of people and the planet upon which we all depend. ■

## Learning Exchange Fosters Cross-Continental Problem Solving

Problems stemming from climate injustice cross cultures and geography – but the good news is, so do solutions.

Grassroots International recently sponsored a learning exchange between indigenous peoples in India and Brazil. Yakshi, a Grassroots grantee in India, and the Xukuru Ororuba tribe in the Amazon have a lot in common.

The tribes Yakshi works with face destruction of their land due to land grabs by mining companies and mega dam projects. The Xukuru have faced violent land conflicts and mounting restrictions in access to natural resources.

But the learning exchange wasn't about problems: another Grassroots partner, the Landless Workers Movement (MST), facilitated the discussion of each group's successes.

That included how Yakshi helped tribes speaking more than 100 different languages raise one voice to call for the Forest Rights Act that now ensures recognition of their right to the forests they've lived in for generations. And how the Xukuru used its traditional governance structure to reclaim their lands – establishing its modern identity *through* not *despite* its ancient customs.

But problems still remain for both groups. That's where the conversation really took off. Both shared ways they've tried to promote sustainable agriculture and advocate for community control of

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# MAKE A GIFT TO THE FUTURE!

Across the globe, grassroots organizations are steadfastly defending the ability for rural women and youth, family farmers and indigenous people to decide how to share and steward land food and water. Yet the forces seeking to concentrate control of the world's land, water and food work voraciously.

Our solidarity and support for their movements for human rights and dignity must grow as well.

That is why, as Grassroots International approaches its fourth decade, we invite you to consider creative gift planning to make a larger and more lasting impact in the struggle for a just and sustainable world.

You don't need great wealth to make a major contribution to the movements you support through Grassroots International. With creative gift planning, you can make a truly significant gift to the future, one that can transform lives and help lead to lasting social justice for years to come.

There are many ways, some very simple to provide for the future through Grassroots International:

- 1 Gifts from your will or trust
- 2 Gifts from a retirement plan
- 3 Gifts of stock and appreciated assets
- 4 Naming Grassroots International as a future beneficiary of your life insurance, bank account or other asset.



Carol Schachet, our Director of Development and Communications, can help answer any of your questions about gift planning. Please call Carol at (617) 524-1400 or e-mail her at [Carol@GrassrootsOnline.org](mailto:Carol@GrassrootsOnline.org)



## Learning Exchange...

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food and water resources.

The solutions they're seeking and the hope they have stretch past the land – past simply ending injustice. The gains they've seen and what they learned at the exchange will impact education,

health, community government, and more, for generations to come.

Learning exchanges like this prove that nothing – not even oceans and languages – can stand in the way of justice. When indigenous peoples join together for the good of their communities and the earth – and you join with them through Grassroots International – powerful progress is possible. ■

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Grassroots International works in partnership with social movements to create a just and sustainable world by advancing human rights to land, water, and food through global grantmaking, building solidarity across organizations and movements, and advocacy in the US.