



INSIGHTS

SPRING 2017 ■ VOL. 33 #1

Stepping Up Support for Climate Justice

Thanks to the commitment of our generous supporters, and the courage of our global partners, Grassroots International is stepping up for climate change solutions.

Through the Climate Justice Initiative campaign (CJI), Grassroots International is raising money to invest in community-led programs that boost climate resilience and provide critical support to movements that are leading the charge for climate justice.

The ultimate goal of this critical work is to improve the lives of people who are bearing the brunt of climate change damage. The CJI implements tangible steps that can make a difference right now, and into the future — and those are coming from communities on the front lines of climate impacts, including Indigenous Peoples, women, small farmers and those in the Global South (where effects of climate change are felt most severely). These are the communities, movements and people that Grassroots International has partnered with for decades.



Here are a few of those people:

Carlos Henríquez (Mexico) — When members of UNOSJO (the Union of Organizations of the Sierra Juarez of Oaxaca) first reached out to Carlos, he believed the agro-toxins he was using on his farm in Santa Gertrudis were safe and more productive than natural fertilizers. After careful experimentation with natural fertilizers and organic pesticide sprays made with chile and garlic, Carlos saw amazing results including increased yields, and his neighbors imitated his success. *“I learned experimenting and now I have confidence in the effectiveness of organic fertilizers,”* Carlos said. *“That’s how I started to abandon the chemicals. [Now] I see the results in my harvest.”* And reducing his village’s reliance on agrichemicals helps reduce their carbon footprint.

In fact, the climate-cooling practices Carlos learned from UNOSJO actually puts carbon back into the soil.

Rubem and Maria dos Santos (Brazil) — Rubem dos Santos worked long, dangerous hours cutting sugar cane for a large agribusiness in the arid Northeast of Brazil. The pay was barely enough to keep his family fed, and the chemicals applied to the fields made him sick. But Rubem and his wife, Maria, got a fresh start thanks to the Landless Workers Movement,

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Initial Climate Justice Initiative Grants

Ten Grants to Save the Earth and Improve People's Lives

Grants made as part of the Climate Justice Initiative will focus on the following areas that can improve people's lives while reducing climate change:

- Alternative and sustainable agriculture systems to cool the planet, restore soil and biodiversity, and create alternative economic models for small farmers;
- Learning exchanges to share and replicate successful models; and,
- Water protection and restoration, including protecting riverways and ecosystems threatened by hydroelectric dams.

First Round of Climate Justice Initiative Grants Totaling \$101,000

» **Black Fraternal Organization of Honduras** — to organize Garifuna (Indigenous Afro-descendent) communities heavily impacted by climate disruption as well as land grabs and other serious human rights violations — \$10,000.

» **Peasant Movement of Papaye** — to create local solutions to climate disruption, including agroecology, agroforestry, and local construction of solar panels in Haiti — \$10,000.

» **Social Network for Justice and Human Rights** — to work with Quilombola communities affected by climate impacts in Brazil — \$10,000.

» **Health of Mother Earth Foundation** — to educate communities in Nigeria to uncover root causes of climate



disruption, resist oil extraction, and promote community-based solutions — \$10,000.

» **Indigenous Environmental Network** — to Stop the Dakota Access Pipeline in Standing Rock— \$5,000.

» **Maya Leaders Alliance** — to implement Caribbean Court of Justice Maya Land Rights Orders for the Maya Q'eqchi and Mopan communities of southern Belize — \$5,000.

» **La Via Campesina International** — to support climate justice training, promotion of agroecology, and resistance to multinational corporations that are trying to control the world's food supply — \$25,000.

» **National Congress of the Peasant Movement of Papaye** — to support its work in response to climate impacts in Haiti — \$15,000.

» **Movement of People Affected by Dams** — to support families impacted by dams in Brazil to gain energy sovereignty and water rights — \$7,000.

» **Union of Agricultural Work Committees** — to support a learning exchange between Palestinian, German, and French farmers to share knowledge about agroecology and climate mitigation techniques — \$4,000.

From the Executive Director

The impact of climate change on the environment is clear — but that is just the beginning. Climate change exacerbates social and economic inequality, particularly where struggles for land and water are already challenging.

That's why, more and more, Grassroots International and our global partners are naming and claiming our work as part of broader climate justice efforts.

What is climate justice? Climate justice focuses on the root causes of climate change, and calls for a transformation to a sustainable, community-led economy. It does that by integrating racial, gender, environmental and economic justice, beyond just cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

In the face of government inaction and corporate aggression, grassroots groups are taking some of the most courageous and effective actions to defend both their own survival and the survival of many forms of life on the planet. Effective grassroots solutions are already having real impacts for local communities and, when replicated, provide the building blocks that make substantial differences in regional, national and international climate realities.

Chief among those solutions is agroecology, which not only protects land and biodiversity but also puts carbon back into the soil. When La Via Campesina says "Small farmers cool the planet," they are referring to the fact that sustainable peasant agriculture — based in food sovereignty and agroecology — returns carbon to the soil by building up organic matter and giving life back to the land.

In 2016, over 70 percent of our grants supported climate justice, including work to stop land grabs and mega-dams, support agroecology and protect environmental rights. This newsletter shares a few examples of how small farmers and Indigenous Peoples — with your support — are developing solutions to climate change, both locally and globally.

In gratitude and solidarity,
Chung-Wha Hong,
Executive Director



Urban agriculture in the Gaza Strip is feeding children like Manal Abu Shalouf and her family.

“There’s no national sovereignty without seed sovereignty.”

Seeds of Hope for Climate Justice

Giant agricultural and chemical companies like Monsanto, Cargill, and Dow foist genetically-modified, corporate seeds and chemicals on the world’s small farmers. Small-scale farmers end up dependent on and indebted to multinational agribusiness profiteers when the promised higher yields and reduced labor turn out to be false. Meanwhile, all the energy needed to produce and ship the seeds and chemicals exacerbates climate change and poisons food, the soil and farmers in the long-run. The two examples below show how the Climate Justice Initiative supports farmers who want to escape reliance on corporate, industrial agriculture, improve the sustainability of their harvest and heal the earth.

Building Up Urban Farming in Palestine
The Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC) — In Palestine, natural resources like land and water are scarce, especially as the occupation gobbles up more of these resources

every day. Climate change has also made the problem even more acute. Grassroots International supports the work of UAWC, a group of small-scale farmers. One of their projects is a seed bank that receives and distributes locally-adapted, heirloom seeds to 200-300 families. The bank allows small farmers to procure heirloom seeds and produce food without expensive chemical inputs and costs associated with corporate, GMO seeds.

“Climate change’s effects on Palestinians are double because the Israeli occupation takes our resources, including land and water. Climate justice means resources rights, land justice, gender justice, food sovereignty and peace.” —Hiba Al-Jibeih of UAWC

African Women Leading the Way
We Are the Solution (WAS)
— Women in Africa are taking leadership roles in creating and implementing climate justice solutions. WAS is a campaign

comprised of women-led rural agricultural associations in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Senegal. WAS promotes agroecology and seed and food sovereignty as the only viable alternatives to corporate takeover of agriculture. WAS established a model for training farmers in agroecological techniques and a store for marketing ecologically produced family farm products produced by women.

“We reject agriculture that pollutes with chemicals, pesticides, and GMOs. Our vision is to truly promote ancestral knowledge and put pressure on our government to take seriously the preservation of our peasant agriculture.”
—Mariama Sonko of WAS

Support for Grassroots
International’s Climate Justice Initiative helps family farmers from around the world resist the dominance of multinational agribusiness to improve their lives and help cool the earth. ■

SUPPORT FARMERS FIGHTING FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE!

The taking of resource rights from the world's poorest people is linked to climate change, and the negative effects of climate change are felt first and most deeply by those who are least responsible for its cause.

Your gift today supports small-scale farming families as they fight for climate justice. You'll help farmers resist control by multinational agribusiness and improve the sustainability of their harvests. This not only improves their lives and their children's futures, it cools the planet and puts the brakes on industry-led activities that accelerate global warming.

Please give generously and spread the word about this critical effort. Thank you!

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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. 

Grassroots International's Climate Justice Initiative

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a Grassroots International partner. They joined other families and occupied and won title to land. Rubem learned organic, sustainable farming techniques that conserve water and control soil erosion. Now they harvest a crop large enough to feed them and give them a future. And Maria says, "Our farm produces food to feed local people instead of poisoning our community."

For Carlos and Rubem and Maria, organizing for climate justice goes far beyond improving their own fields and forests. Like the movements they are a part of, they see that the causes of climate change are systematically related to the factors behind global poverty, hunger, and inequality. The same factors that are widening the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" are also driving climate change: The relentless abuse of land and water systems, the industrialization and commodification of food systems, and the wanton dismissal of basic human rights — particularly of Indigenous Peoples.



Rubem and Maria dos Santos of Brazil are saving their village and the planet by transitioning to sustainable farming techniques.

Any viable solutions to climate change, therefore, also address the systems behind it, including how land, water, food and resources are protected.

Through the CJJ, we can, together — as donors, activists, and movement leaders in the US and around the world — challenge the fundamentally unjust systems that created climate change and build new alternatives that put people and the planet first. ■