

A Donor Committed to the Global Struggle

Two and a half years ago, I was drawn to Grassroots International's approach to funding community organizers — empowering oppressed peoples while respecting their dignity. And I've become passionate about our partners, including the Health Of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), in Nigeria, and the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR).

Meeting with HOMEF organizers in Nigeria, I learned that ecological justice, especially for the poor, is a prerequisite for self-determination. I now see that the Pan-African fight for clean water is a fight for human rights.

The previous year, in a Donor Engagement Group (DEG), I got to know more about PCHR's work. Using international law to advocate for their homeland while building bridges of solidarity with other racialized groups inspired me.

If you are a donor, a DEG is a chance not only to help organizers fight for liberation, but also to strengthen your own solidarity, as an American, with grantees — a way to see how apparently disparate struggles in the global South are linked to each other and struggles in the U.S.

To dismantle oppressive systems, we must “overstand” what upholds them and keeps us divided as nationals, because profiteers of oppression have no regard for national borders.

The 1960s Civil Rights and Black Power activists felt linked to decolonization in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. The causes of the state-sanctioned murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis also caused the state-sanctioned murder of Ahmad Erakat in the Gaza Strip.

We must fight injustice everywhere. The energy of global resistance

movements is immense. But we must find and support one another. Let's help Grassroots International partner with these communities, to amplify the voices of our common struggle, until victory.

In solidarity,
Nick Johnson

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.



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NEWS FROM GRASSROOTS INTERNATIONAL

FALL 2020 ■ VOL. 36 #2

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY & COVID-19

Root Causes of Coronavirus Pandemic

Corporate agriculture not only destroys the environment, impoverishes small farmers, and grabs land from Indigenous peoples. Its greedy policies create ideal breeding conditions for pandemics, including COVID-19.

The fact is that the huge pig industry may have been the key global vector for COVID-19 — turning a local outbreak into a pandemic in just a few weeks. That's because global livestock industries grow and ship so many animals squeezed together, it maximizes the spread of disease from animal to animal, and on to humans worldwide.

“That [COVID-19] is splattering across host types means populations of any living organism can be commoditized, turned into another [disease] reservoir ... and transported near and far, a threat to all others.”

—Rob Wallace, evolutionary biologist

In other words, industrial agriculture and its obsession with profit bears responsibility for destroying natural local barriers to disease and endangering all of humanity.

Food sovereignty, in contrast, makes the most of local conditions and

opportunities. And this concentration on serving local needs minimizes the possibility of diseases jumping to other regions.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
Based on Agroecology — Is the Answer to Agribusiness Meeting Threats to Equality and Global Health

Food Sovereignty is the sustainable, healthy, and equitable alternative to the profit-driven model of the corporate food industry. Food Sovereignty means growing food locally in order to feed families and communities, not to fill investor pockets. It protects people from diseases that are spread by global agribusinesses — corporations that care about nothing but money.

Food Sovereignty asserts the rights of peasants, landless people, and local communities:

- to have land, water, seed, and credit;
- to decide what they produce and consume;
- to protect themselves from foreign price dumping, and from pandemics spread through industrial agribusiness;
- to have a voice in agricultural policy;
- to ensure women farmers a fair



and substantial role in food production.

Here are some examples of Grassroots International's Food Sovereignty partners — and their effective, locally-formed responses to oppression and to COVID-19.

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“[Food Sovereignty creates a world] free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social and economic classes and generations.”

—2007 Nyéléni Food Sovereignty Forum

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Where Do Black Lives Matter? Everywhere!

The struggles are the same, everywhere ...
in Minneapolis streets ...

Or Brazillian mountains ...

The Quilombola are Afro-descendants who resisted slavery and founded their rural communities. But they didn't gain rights to land they'd lived on for hundreds of years, until 1988.

And still, large landowners and state officials use violence, even murder, to grab Quilombola land. For those who worship profit, Quilombola lives don't matter.



GRASSROOTS NEWS United Response to Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been horrifying, especially for peasants and racial minorities, on whom the virus has wreaked endless misery and death.

The emergency calls for help from our partners led to our Emergency Pandemic Fund. And our requests for donations prompted inspiring levels of generosity, totaling nearly \$400,000.

Here's a sampling of life-saving Emergency projects, which are as varied as our partners:

- * Buying meds, masks, sanitizers, and protective products for the Afro-Brazilian Quilombola,
- * Providing preventive health education, materials and outreach, to the Garifuna in Honduras,
- * Funding COVID-19 E.R.s for Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

Remember, the crisis is not over. Please continue to give!

But thanks to you, our grantees like MOQUIBOM and CONAQ are bringing hope, by organizing Quilombolas to defend themselves and their territories.

Or the northern Atlantic coast of Honduras ...

The Garifuna, descendants of shipwrecked Africans who escaped slavery and put down roots, face the same injustices. Their lands are stolen, with government approval, for tourism, and oil extraction.

But our local partner OFRANEH is helping them to organize, resist, and win, in the courts of law and public

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From the Executive Director

Wow. 2020 is nearly, finally over. Around the world, both we and our movements have all faced so much this year. But we have also stepped up in inspirational ways.

In this issue of *Solidarity Notes*, you can find stories of Grassroots International partners facing down disasters and building real solutions. Black communities from Brazil to Honduras are defending their land and lives. Our Palestinian and Puerto Rican partners and grantees are confronting both COVID and colonialism, providing much needed education, food, and facilities.

You can also learn more about your own impact. Since March, generous contributions from donors like you allowed us to provide a record amount of emergency funding to communities around the world.

This year more than ever, we've seen how our fates are connected. A virus may spread, but so too can solidarity to combat it.

As a fellow donor Nick Johnson writes in this issue, "The energy of global resistance movements is immense. But we must find and support one another." You and other donor-activists have helped ensure that, through one of the most difficult years in recent memory, global movements can continue to build a better world. Thank you!

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



FOOD SOVEREIGNTY & COVID-19

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PUERTO RICO

Feeding the People, Protecting Public Health

Puerto Rico's colonial status has exploited women, labor, and land for profit; impoverished the people, and nearly destroyed independent farming — making the island dependent on global supplies of industrial, disease-prone food.

Food Sovereignty can remove the root causes of hunger and poverty, as well as widespread disease.

Comedores Sociales (Community Kitchens), our local partner, is working effectively to replace an unjust, unsafe food system.

In the current COVID-19 emergency, which is intensifying injustice, *Comedores Sociales* is delivering food to people trapped in lockdown with few resources. For the longer-term, it's promoting the benefits of Food Sovereignty for Puerto Rico — growing, sharing, and controlling its own food supplies, based on communal need, not corporate profit.

Thanks to your support, *Comedores Sociales* is proving Food Sovereignty viable. They've linked peasant farmers and harvests to community kitchens where people can eat at a fair price. And the proceeds, in turn, support the comedores and expand peasant farming. The goal is to scale up, once the pandemic subsides, to provide safe, nutritious food for the whole island.



PALESTINE

Social Movements Respond to COVID-19

Grassroots International partners with social movements in the Middle East to meet emergencies and fight the fundamental driver of poverty, hunger, and disease — inequality in all its forms.

The Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS) has long served its community. In the current crisis, it has distributed over half a million pamphlets on prevention, and operated 50 community and eight mobile clinics, thereby drastically limiting COVID-19 fatalities.

Meanwhile, the **Lajee Center** in Aida Refugee Camp is providing resources for young Palestinians and their families. Local solutions include cultivating rooftop and urban gardens, and providing basic services of water, cloth masks, and remote education — even as Israel's occupation makes the pandemic worse.

But there is so much more to do! That's why your continued support of Grassroots International is so essential!

BRAZIL

In COVID-19 Chaos: We Demand Emergency Agrarian Reform

The Brazilian Government seems to be helping coronavirus to spread, destroy, and kill — making the

COVID-19 crisis here one of the world's deadliest and worst managed.

Social movements, like the Landless Workers' Movement (MST), are working nonstop to save and improve people's lives. MST has converted their training centers into COVID-19 hospitals and is campaigning to enact "Emergency Measures for Agrarian Reform," to prioritize health, jobs, and farms for the people.



The goal of Agrarian Reform — and of your generous support for all our global partners — is Food Sovereignty: a sustainable food system that pays workers fairly, produces sustainable nourishment for all, and defends communities from pandemics.

Where Do Black Lives Matter? Everywhere!

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opinion. Thanks to you!

But the struggle is far from over. Elites have contempt for Garifuna and Quilombolas lives, especially those of activists. Armed men recently murdered one and abducted five others. That's why your continued support is so vital.

BLACK LIVES MATTER!