

MOJA

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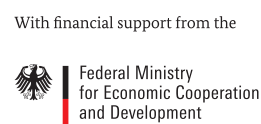
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Cover picture: 'A world without hunger' (UMSF) - rice transplanting.
Village of Fellobantan, sub-district of Dara Labé, Guinea, August 2017.
Union Guinéenne des Volontaires du Développement (UGVD), a partner of DVV International, West Africa.

Page 16: 'A world without hunger' (UMSF) - peanut harvest. Village of Goloya, sub-district of Bantiguel, District of Pita, Guinea. August 2017. Union Guinéenne des Volontaires du Développement (UGVD), a partner of DVV International, West Africa.

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MOJJA

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MOJA was established by a network of African partners and supporters



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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Dear readers and authors

The MOJA Editorial Board is pleased to announce the release of the second Issue of the *Journal of Adult Education*. We extend our gratitude to our colleagues from various regions of Africa who responded to our call and made significant contributions to this Issue. We are honoured and privileged to be part of a growing community of adult educators dedicated to advancing adult education across the continent. We also deeply appreciate our hardworking team, who have ensured the Journal reflects the diverse voices from different regions in Africa.

This second Issue, focusing on ***Building Community Food Systems and Livelihoods***, arose from a broader discussion on conceptualising and fostering hope and possibility during crises. Discussions about the global polycrisis are expanding and intensifying due to its significant impact on humanity and the planet. While climate change and the COVID pandemic have disrupted socio-economic and development goals, they have also highlighted the urgent need for the adult education community to engage with the interconnected crises. In times of crisis, it is crucial to respond to issues like, *inter alia*, food and hunger, poor health and disease, energy, water and drought, gender-based violence, migration, and housing and shelter. 'Food and hunger' is a recurring theme across the continent, and we are inspired by the diverse narratives that demonstrate how communities build food systems and associated livelihoods under challenging conditions. These are stories of hope and possibility.

As the Journal is new and part of the larger African Continental Project (ACP), we are excited to welcome new staff members who will assist in enhancing the Journal's development, diversity and readership. In line with this growth, we are pleased to announce changes to the Editorial Board. The newly constituted board includes Carole Houndjo (Benin), Rebecca Lekoko (Botswana), Ivor Baatjes (South Africa), Frauke Heinze (Tanzania), Donia Benmiloud (Tunisia), Chiraz Kilani (Tunisia) and Twine Bananuka (Uganda). The Board welcomes David Harrington (South Africa) as the new Editor-in-Chief and expresses its gratitude to the previous Editor-in-Chief, Ivor Baatjes, who will remain as a member of the Editorial Board.

We eagerly anticipate our ongoing collaboration with you – our authors and readers – as we strive to advance the uniqueness of the Journal. Your suggestions, thoughts and discussions on our progress are always welcome.

With best regards

The Editorial Board
MOJA Journal of Adult Education
Cape Town

EDITORIAL BOARD



CAROLE AVANDE HOUNDJO

Carole Avande Houndjo is a linguist of African languages and an advocate and activist for the right to education for youth and adults. She has coordinated the literacy and translation programme of the NGO Wycliffe in Benin for more than 10 years. Since 2014, Carole has been the coordinator of the Pamoja West Africa Network. The Pamoja West Africa Network has members from 15 countries in Africa that promote the REFLECT approach. Pamoja works to strengthen the capacities of civil society organisations to improve the quality of education in Africa. In addition to this, Pamoja promotes and advocates for the right to education of youth and adults in Africa.



IVOR BAATJES

Ivor Baatjes is the Executive Director of the Canon Collins Trust. Prior to this, he served as Director of the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET), Nelson Mandela University; co-host of the National Research Foundation SARCHI Chair in Community Adult and Worker Education; board member of the National Institute for Human and Social Sciences (NIHSS); and Chair of the Education Policy Consortium (EPC). He has worked across all the subsectors of the post-school education and training sector and was a member of the current Ministerial Task Team on Community Education and Training. Ivor was a senior researcher at the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT) at the University of Johannesburg and previously Director of the Centre for Adult Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). He also served as a policy maker in the National Department of Education in the mid-1990s and as a member of several ministerial and departmental reference groups and task teams. Ivor was one of the founding members of the digital platform MOJA - Adult Education Africa and served as content manager of MOJA and editor-in-chief of the first *MOJA Journal of Adult Education*. His research interests include the social and solidarity economy and its relationships with community-driven food, health, water and energy systems; adult and community education; higher education; workers education; and learning in social movements.



TWINE HANNINGTON BANANUKA

Twine Hannington Bananuka works as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Adult and Community Education, School of Distance and Lifelong Learning at Makerere University, Uganda. He holds a Master's degree and a PhD in Adult and Community Education from Florida A&M University, USA and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa respectively. His teaching and research interests are in areas of adult education and socio-economic transformation, community development, citizenship education, post-qualitative research methodologies, and innovative teaching and learning methods.



DONIA BENMILOUD

Donia Benmiloud is the Regional Director of DVV International, North Africa. She has 20 years of experience in managing international cooperation projects across Asia, Africa and Europe focusing on economic and social inclusion, entrepreneurship, employment, training and education. She is a lifelong learner with a keen interest in strategic thinking, gender issues, working with people at grassroots level, as well as research planning, design and implementation.



DAVID HARRINGTON

David Harrington has worked in the field of education and adult education for the past 30 years, previously as Regional Director for DVV International in Southern Africa. He is Project Manager of the African Continental Project and MOJA Adult Education Platform, and co-editor of the second *MOJA Journal of Adult Education*. He has worked extensively with African networks and other stakeholders in helping to establish an enabling environment for adult education, especially in Southern Africa, including the development of policies, strategies and curricula. His interests include promoting and working with community-responsive education that recognises the value and contribution of non-formal education to community development.



FRAUKE HEINZE

Frauke Heinze is an international public health and adult education expert with more than 25 years' experience in international cooperation across Africa and Asia. Currently she is working as the Regional Director DVV International, East/ Horn of Africa and has been involved in the design and establishment of the MOJA platform. She is passionate about enhancing national systems for quality health and non-formal youth and adult education service delivery, and designing respective policies, implementation frameworks and curricula. She also has a keen interest in research and developing community-needs oriented education, skills development and behaviour change interventions and trainings.



CHIRAZ KILANI

Chiraz Kilani is an HDR Lecturer in Didactics of Sciences and a teacher-researcher at the Higher Institute of Education and Continuing Education of Tunis. She is authorised to direct research in Didactics of Sciences and Sciences of Education. She holds a doctorate from Claude Bernard Lyon 1 University. She is the Director of the Supramolecular Chemistry and Science Didactics research unit and serves as the national coordinator and trainer with the team of the international foundation 'Main à la Pâte' (teaching science using the Investigative Approach). She is the author of several articles on the analysis of teaching practices. She is an Auditor 2100; a specialist in the field of training in University and Didactic Pedagogy (certified ISO 29990); and an expert in the training of adult trainers and lifelong learning.



REBECCA NTHOGO LEKOKO

Professor Rebecca Nthogo Lekoko was educated in Botswana, Canada and the United States of America, first as a teacher trainer then adult educator. She graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a Doctor of Education in Adult Education. With four decades of working in diverse adult education and learning environments, Professor Lekoko has made a significant contribution in out of school education for children, non-formal education, community learning centres, empowerment and social mobilisation strategies; these mostly done under the aegis of the University of Botswana. Now retired from UB, she is an inaugural Dean of Academic Affairs of a premier Military College, Defence Command and Staff College of the Botswana Defence Force. Additionally, she is now a prominent advocate for age with rights and a founder of Ageless Inspirations Charitable Organization, Botswana. She believes inclusion and representation of all is essential for an inclusive economic development agenda. She is the chief editor of *Ba Isago Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* and has published extensively locally and internationally and has attended many conferences serving as a presenter, a keynote speaker, chair of sessions and a discussant to the keynote speaker.

EDITORIAL

The second Issue of the *Journal of Adult Education* is launched at a time when communities on the African continent and beyond continue to experience difficult, and often extremely harsh, socio-economic issues. We live in a time of unprecedented climate change which is affecting farmers worldwide and limiting food production. In addition to this, the war in Ukraine has had a devastating impact on supplies and prices globally. Many African countries rely on a significant percentage of imports of their agricultural products such as wheat, vegetable oils and fertiliser from the Ukraine and Russia. The disruption of these global supply chains, among others, has resulted in reduced imports which, in turn, has led to escalating prices worldwide.

The scale of the current global hunger and malnutrition crisis is enormous. This year, an estimated **309 million people are facing acute levels of food insecurity** in the 71 countries served by the World Food Programme of the United Nations¹.

Within this seemingly unrelenting and merciless context, we recognise that communities on the African continent are rich in both conceptualisations and innovative practices that respond to various socio-economic problems. Food and hunger is a significant theme and we are interested in the different strategies and approaches used by communities to address this basic human need. For this Issue, we invited submissions from authors who share experiences that draw attention to the work of adult educators working in community food systems and livelihoods, including:

- How communities are dealing with food and hunger and building community food systems
- What new and/or emerging practices associated with building community food systems and livelihoods exist
- How adult practitioners support the development of community food systems and related livelihoods

- How we (re)think, (re)imagine, (re)build theory about community food systems and associated livelihoods.

Two important concepts that are associated with food systems are food security and food sovereignty. These concepts are increasingly prevalent in scholarly works, policy discourse, debates about sustainable development and several programmes, projects and campaigns associated with food and hunger. While these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they represent two ideologically different concepts.

Food security is concerned with ensuring a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. Food security does not distinguish where food comes from, or the conditions under which it is produced and distributed. It relies on value chains that may originate far away and, as mentioned above, the impact of the war in Ukraine is just one example of the vulnerability of such global value chains. The COVID-19 pandemic also showed us just how fragile they can be. Founded on for-profit models, they do not centralise the welfare of local communities.

Food sovereignty, a term first coined in 1996 by members of La Via Campesina, an international farmers' organisation², is about ecologically appropriate production, distribution and consumption. It is concerned about social-economic justice and views food as a right and not a commodity. It focuses on local food systems as ways to tackle hunger and poverty and guaranteed sustainable food security for all peoples.

We draw the readers' attention to a brief explanation (See pages 10-11) of both concepts, and to the *Declaration of Nyéléni*, a document put together by over 500 representatives from more than 80 countries who gathered at the World Forum for Food Sovereignty (Mali, 2007) as part of galvanising a global movement for food sovereignty (See pages 12-14).

In this Issue of the *MOJA Journal of Adult Education*, the contributing authors represent a wide range of countries across Africa who offer articles about the different ways in which adult learning and education (ALE) contributes to addressing and combating food insecurity and/or promoting food sovereignty across the continent. The selection of articles provides a snapshot of the diversity of theory and practice related to building community food systems and livelihoods.

In the first article, **Twine Hannington Bananuka** comments on Issue 1 of the journal and notes its relevance to the ALE landscape in Africa today. He acknowledges the accessible style the journal promotes and the numerous topics covered, including reflections on CONFINTEA VII that gave rise to the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA), and its implications for Africa.

Karen Hendricks, Melissa Jansen Arendse and Bevil Lucas show us the power of grassroots organising as they recount the origins and history of Cissie Gool House (CGH), a community occupation in Cape Town, South Africa. Their article focuses on the CGH Noor Tofie Food Garden, an example of food sovereignty, inspired by the principles and values of social action, solidarity, self-governance and cooperation – a space of knowledge and learning.

Karim Chebbi takes us on a journey exploring the historical roots and modern practice of agricultural cooperatives in Tunisia. Cooperative practices take advantage of policies that facilitate eco-friendly approaches, while acknowledging the role and importance of adult education. Chebbi shows how cooperatives, with their focus on collective farming and food sovereignty, are learning and doing entities, and could become a beacon of hope and resilience in Tunisia in the fight against global hunger.

Mamadou Mariko explores the role of ALE in response to climate change in the Sahel, a largely agrarian region that has been severely impacted. He proposes a practical approach and explains how adult education can be used as a vehicle to equip local communities with the knowledge and tools needed to respond to climate change. He argues that it is only by addressing the effects of climate change and adapting to their impacts that we can mitigate the problem of food insecurity that is affecting more and more communities across the continent every year.

In Botswana, where food insecurity is an ongoing challenge, **Keba Hulela** shows how cooperation between government, academia and local communities has been used to respond to building food systems. Hulela focuses on a special diploma programme targeting adult education practitioners (AEPs), which gave them an opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills to assist farmers and community members in addressing challenges related to food systems. The learning was reciprocal in that the AEPs also learned from the farmers and community members.

Nohlumelo John, Vuyokazi Made, Siyabulela Mama, Sibusiso Myoli, Nombulelo Sineke and Ziphazethu Vani's article seeks to demonstrate pathways and possibilities of food sovereignty through a community food system in the Eastern Cape, South

Africa. In a context of unemployment, poverty and inequality, the article demonstrates how the building of a community food system becomes an 'automatic' alternative for working class communities – not only as resistance to unemployment and poverty but also as a therapeutic and life-making process.

Sangwani Tembo and Ellen Kapeleta interrogate the role of seed sovereignty in achieving food security in Malawi. We learn about the struggle of smallholder farmers to combat commercial interests that often dictate the kinds of agricultural practices that dominate. The authors highlight the need to respect and learn from indigenous knowledge systems in order to help eradicate food insecurity and they explore the key role of adult education and peer learning in establishing cooperative models of exchange and learning.

Refugee populations exist at the intersection of multiple challenges. **Salome Joy Awidi** looks at what food security means to displaced populations in Uganda, and the integral role that food and food production plays in a people's cultural identity. The article describes the strength and resilience that refugees exhibit in the face of many challenges and struggles as they participate in livelihood adaptation in new and unfamiliar contexts and also in the preservation of their food systems. The author explains the role of adult education in supporting this.

Zahia Kacher explores how rural women in Algeria are using local and indigenous knowledge and intergenerational learning to improve their incomes and food security. The article focuses on the Rural Women's Association in Algeria (AFUD), which argues for the establishment of educational farms where ALE principles are embedded. The author makes a number of recommendations to strengthen ALE programmes, such as integrating local knowledge into training and promoting organic farming, among others.

We hope that the articles stimulate further debate and discussion on the topic of community food systems and livelihoods and also provide inspiring examples of how adult education is a powerful tool in this struggle.

- 1 This number does not yet account for the expected updated analyses from Sudan and Palestine. <https://www.wfp.org/publications/wfp-global-operational-response-plan>
- 2 La Vía Campesina describes itself as “an international movement which coordinates peasant organizations of small and middle-scale producers, agricultural workers, rural women, and indigenous communities from Asia, Africa, America, and Europe” <https://viacampesina.org/en/>



Source: Unsplash

FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES?

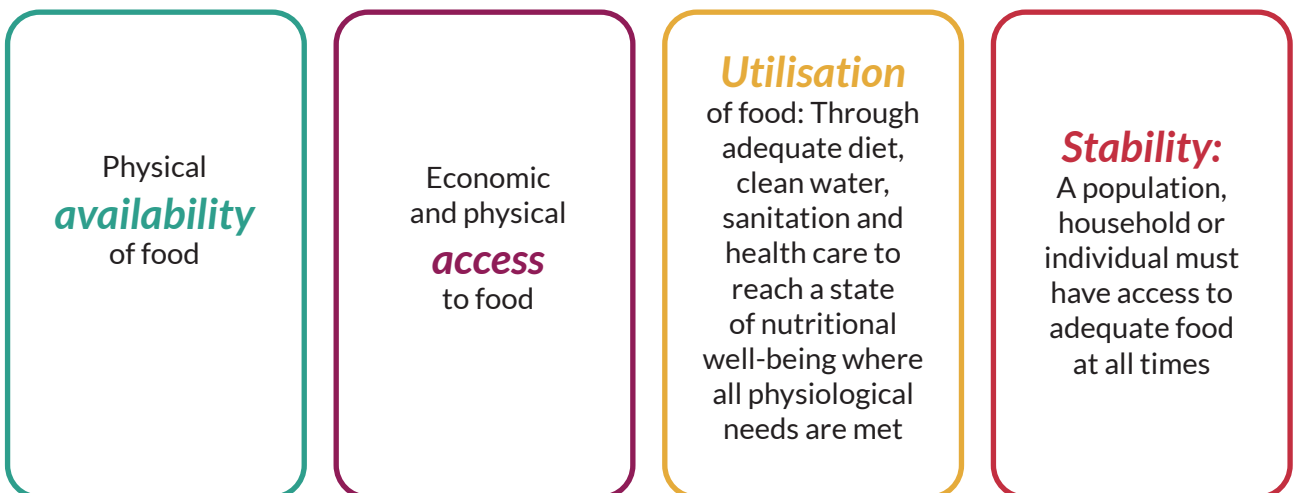
FOOD SECURITY

When all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

World Food Summit, 1996



The four main dimensions of food security:



Our present food system is a global industrial agri-food system where food is a commodity. This system, which favours and uses monoculture, chemicals, GMOs and patents, is owned and controlled by a few multi-national corporations. It is shaped and driven by profit which takes priority over peoples' rights, their lives and the environment.



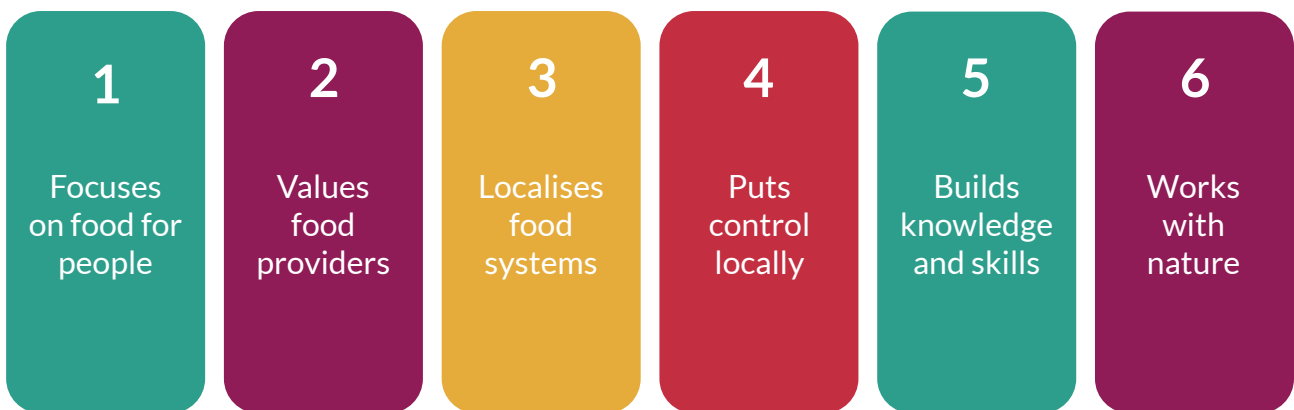
FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Food sovereignty insists that the main purpose of the food system is to feed the population in a way that is fair and sustainable. It puts the people who produce, distribute and consume food at the **centre** of decisions on food systems and policies. It happens by building local food systems – bringing producers and consumers closer together – in a system that suits the local environment, culture and traditions. It values traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and skills. It is essential that food systems should **work with nature**, respecting the integrity of ecosystems. In practice, food sovereignty is often linked with agroecological farming.



Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.

The six pillars of food sovereignty:



Nyéleni, Mali, 2007

NYELENI DECLARATION

27 February 2007

Nyeléni Village, Sélingué, Mali

In 2007, the village of Sélingué in Southern Mali was host to a pivotal moment in social movement history. The first World Forum for Food Sovereignty was held with more than 500 people from five continents. At this meeting the movement established a shared vision of *food sovereignty* and made a collective commitment to realise it. The Forum, and the Declaration made there (see below), was named after a woman of legend in rural Mali: Nyéléni. Nyéléni resisted social discrimination, refused marriage and worked the land to become a better farmer than the majority of male farmers around her. As a poor young woman of colour, her story is not only about food or farming. It is about the struggle for women's rights, against oppression – it is about strength in the face of adversity.

We, more than 500 representatives from more than 80 countries, of organisations of peasants/family farmers, artisanal fisher-folk, indigenous peoples, landless peoples, rural workers, migrants, pastoralists, forest communities, women, youth, consumers, environmental and urban movements have gathered together in the village of Nyéléni in Sélingué, Mali to strengthen a global movement for food sovereignty. We are doing this, brick by brick, living in huts constructed by hand in the local tradition, and eating food that is being produced and prepared by the Sélingué community. We give our collective endeavour the name “Nyéléni” as a tribute to and inspiration from a legendary Malian peasant woman who farmed and fed her peoples well.

Most of us are food producers and are ready, able and willing to feed all the world's peoples. Our heritage as food producers is critical to the future of humanity. This is specially so in the case of women and indigenous peoples who are historical creators of knowledge about food and agriculture and are devalued. But this heritage and our capacities to produce healthy, good and abundant food are being threatened and undermined by neo-liberalism and global capitalism. Food sovereignty gives us the hope and power to preserve, recover and build on our food producing knowledge and capacity.

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal-fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just income to all peoples and the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage our lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social classes and generations.

In Nyéléni, through numerous debates and interactions, we are deepening our collective understanding of food sovereignty and learned about the reality of the struggles of our respective movements to retain autonomy and regain our powers. We now understand better the tools we need to build our movement and advance our collective vision.

What are we fighting for?

A world where...

...all peoples, nations and states are able to determine their own food producing systems and policies that provide every one of us with good quality, adequate, affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate food;

...recognition and respect of women's roles and rights in food production, and representation of women in all decision making bodies;

...all peoples in each of our countries are able to live with dignity, earn a living wage for their labour and have the opportunity to remain in their homes;

...where food sovereignty is considered a basic human right, recognised and implemented by communities, peoples, states and international bodies;

...we are able to conserve and rehabilitate rural environments, fish stocks, landscapes and food traditions based on ecologically sustainable management of land, soils, water, seas, seeds, livestock and other biodiversity;

...we value, recognise and respect our diversity of traditional knowledge, food, language and culture, and the way we organise and express ourselves;

.... there is genuine and integral agrarian reform that guarantees peasants full rights to land, defends and recovers the territories of indigenous peoples, ensures fishing communities' access and control over their fishing areas and eco-systems, honours access and control over pastoral lands and migratory routes, assures decent jobs with fair remuneration and labour rights for all, and a future for young people in the countryside;...where agrarian reform revitalises interdependence between producers and consumers, ensures community survival, social and economic justice and ecological sustainability, and respect for local autonomy and governance with equal rights for women and men...where it guarantees the right to territory and self-determination for our peoples;

...where we share our lands and territories peacefully and fairly among our peoples, be we peasants, indigenous peoples, artisanal fishers, pastoralists, or others;

...in the case of natural and human-created disasters and conflict-recovery situations, food sovereignty acts as a kind of "insurance" that strengthens local recovery efforts and mitigates negative impacts... where we remember that affected communities are not helpless, and where strong local organisation for self-help is the key to recovery;

...where peoples' power to make decisions about their material, natural and spiritual heritage are defended;

... where all peoples have the right to defend their territories from the actions of transnational corporations.

What are we fighting against?

Imperialism, neo-liberalism, neo-colonialism and patriarchy, and all systems that impoverish life, resources and eco-systems, and the agents that promote the above such as international financial institutions, the World Trade Organisation, free trade agreements, transnational corporations, and governments that are antagonistic to their peoples;

The dumping of food at prices below the cost of production in the global economy;

The domination of our food and food producing systems by corporations that place profits before people, health and the environment;

Technologies and practices that undercut our future food producing capacities, damage the environment and put our health at risk. Those include transgenic crops and animals, terminator technology, industrial aquaculture and destructive fishing practices, the so-called white revolution of industrial dairy practices, the so-called 'old' and 'new' Green Revolutions, and the "Green Deserts" of industrial bio-fuel monocultures and other plantations;

The privatisation and commodification of food, basic and public services, knowledge, land, water, seeds, livestock and our natural heritage;

Development projects/models and extractive industry that displace people and destroy our environments and natural heritage;

Wars, conflicts, occupations, economic blockades, famines, forced displacement of people and confiscation of their land, and all forces and governments that cause and support them; post disaster and conflict reconstruction programmes that destroy our environments and capacities;

The criminalisation of all those who struggle to protect and defend our rights;

Food aid that disguises dumping, introduces GMOs into local environments and food systems and creates new colonialism patterns;

The internationalisation and globalisation of paternalistic and patriarchal values that marginalise women, diverse agricultural, indigenous, pastoral and fisher communities around the world.

What can and will we do about it?

Just as we are working with the local community in Sélingué to create a meeting space at Nyéléni, we are committed to building our collective movement for food sovereignty by forging alliances, supporting each others' struggles and extending our solidarity, strengths, and creativity to peoples all over the world who are committed to food sovereignty. Every struggle, in any part of the world for food sovereignty, is our struggle.

We have arrived at a number of collective actions to share our vision of food sovereignty with all peoples of this world, which are elaborated in our synthesis document. We will implement these actions in our respective local areas and regions, in our own movements and jointly in solidarity with other movements. We will share our vision and action agenda for food sovereignty with others who are not able to be with us here in Nyéléni so that the spirit of Nyéléni permeates across the world and becomes a powerful force to make food sovereignty a reality for peoples all over the world.

Finally, we give our unconditional and unwavering support to the peasant movements of Mali and ROPPA in their demands that food sovereignty become a reality in Mali and by extension in all of Africa.

Now is the time for food sovereignty!

In 2025 in India, the Global Nyéléni Forum will be held in which hundreds of delegates from all over the world will discuss strategies and solutions for more just and agroecological food systems and will relaunch a global alliance capable of counteracting the forces that are pushing the world into a deeper, multi-dimensional crisis.

For further information see:

<https://www.foodsovereignty.org/nyeleni-process/>

***If we can send man to the moon, why can we not plant a tree?
African women in general need to know that it's OK for them to be the
way they are – to see the way they are as a strength, and to be liberated
from fear and from silence.***

Professor Wangari Maathai was a social, environmental and political activist who founded the Green Belt Movement. In 2004 she became the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize

***As a natural resource, land should be a common resource that is
accessible to all – but especially women, who are often the producers of
food and the carers at home.***

Mercia Andrews (Rural Women's Assembly, Southern Africa)

***Seed is the source of life and the first link in the food chain. Control over
seed means a control over our lives, our food and our freedom...***

Dr Vandana Shiva (ecofeminist, environmental, food sovereignty and anti-globalisation activist and scholar)



REFLECTIONS ON ISSUE 1, MOJA JOURNAL OF ADULT EDUCATION



Twine Hannington Bananuka, looks back at Issue 1 of the MOJA Journal of Adult Education. Among others, he comments on its relevance to the landscape of ALE in Africa today, its accessible style and the diversity of topics. He also remarks on the need for adult educators to adopt a common vocabulary.



Twine Hannington Bananuka works as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Adult and Community Education, School of Distance and Lifelong Learning at Makerere University, Uganda. He holds a Master's degree and a PhD in Adult and Community Education from Florida A&M University, USA and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa respectively. His teaching and research interests are in areas of adult education and socio-economic transformation, community development, citizenship education, post-qualitative research methodologies, and innovative teaching and learning methods.

Several scholars, such as Nafukho, Amutabi and Otunga (2005), have argued that the practice, profession, and discipline of adult education have come a long way, and that adult education is distinct from general education and development studies. In Africa, we have transitioned from a pre-colonial, largely informal delivery system to the now 'modern adult education' that was influenced by contact with the West (Atim and Ngaka, 2004). The issues pertaining to adult education might not be that different worldwide, but some are contextually unique to Africa in terms of cultures and development challenges. The *MOJA Journal of Adult Education* is a welcome addition as it creates a platform for advocacy, sharing experiences, giving voice to communities and actors, and also putting forward ideas and possibilities for socio-economic transformation. I do extend my profound appreciation to DVV International which funds this Journal. This online Journal (some hard copies were made available) is timely as it fills the gap left by DVV International's *Adult Education and Development Journal* that ceased publication in 2019.

In reviewing this Journal, I was cognisant of the fact that it was a first issue. I wish to acknowledge the Editorial Board, stakeholders and those who work in adult education and lifelong learning who inspired and contributed towards the vision of this Journal. On the whole, the issue speaks directly to all stakeholders including academia, civil society organisations, funding agencies, educators, learners, and government actors. I commend the general writing style, especially in relation to using accessible, easy-to-read language that meets the interests of a diverse audience in terms of level of education and context. The inclusion of pictures and poems with the articles is commendable as they add to the accessibility of the issue and make one

think of the saying: 'a picture is worth a thousand words'. As stated in the MOJA Journal guidelines for writers, only photographs with informed consent were accepted and all articles needed to be properly referenced. In terms of content, the topics were diverse and covered a number of issues on adult education and lifelong learning. These included informal employment and inclusivity, the impact of insecurity on education, food security and livelihoods, the role of universities in adult education, adult education in refugee settlements, economic endeavours of rural women in Tunisia, women's empowerment, the role of adult learning and education (ALE) in conflict resolution, protest and community organising as a form of ALE, the role and effect of digital technologies on ALE and participatory research approaches. The articles in this issue dealt with a wide range of areas with an underlying focus on socio-economic inclusion/exclusion. This makes sense as adult education deals with marginalisation. Quite fundamental was the reflection on *CONFINTEA VII* that gave rise to the Marrakech Framework for Action (MFA) and its implications for Africa. This issue also has profiles of selected adult education networks on the African continent which I felt was important for a first issue.

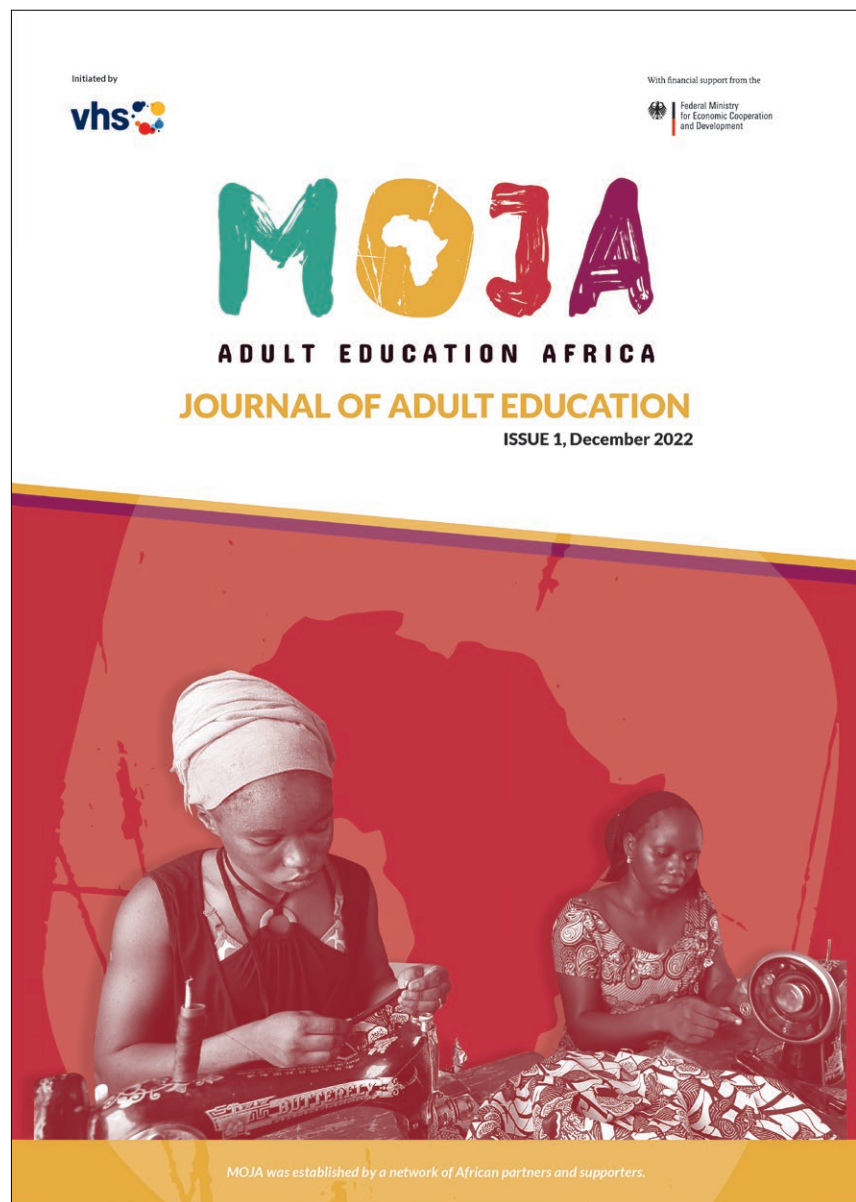
The strength of this first issue is its diverse focus and its ability to highlight major opportunities and challenges of ALE on the continent. I feel this was good in order to raise awareness of issues at stake to the partners and actors. As a first issue, the Editorial Board chose to cast the net wide in order to emphasise the diversity and multi-sectoral nature of adult education.

Scholars such as Hill, Rogers-Shaw, and Carr-Chellman (2023) have stated that the field of adult education has changed in name and boundaries.

As pointed out by Hill et al, I noticed that different authors used various terminologies and concepts to refer to the field, such as adult learning and education, adult education, lifelong learning and so on. This can be confusing to readers as not all may be conversant with the different coinages, terminologies, and meanings. I would therefore recommend the adoption of common terms for uniformity, for example, *CONFINTEA VII's* 'adult education and lifelong learning'. The campaign launched by the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) and a wide range of partners promotes the global use of 'ALE' as an inclusive term that encompasses all aspects of adult learning and education, and one that we hope is adopted universally in the future.

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If you haven't yet read Issue 1 of the MOJA Journal of Adult Education, please click [HERE](#) to download it.

THE COMMUNITY FOOD GARDEN OF CISSIE GOOL HOUSE



Karen Hendricks is a leader of the housing movement *Reclaim the City*, Woodstock Chapter. She is also a resident and coordinator of Cissie Gool House (CGH). Her vision is for a truly inclusive city for the poor and working-class women of colour to participate in decision-making for their communities, city and country.



Melissa Jansen Arendse is an activist in the *Reclaim the City* movement. She resides at Cissie Gool House and was elected as a Garden Monitor. Melissa loves being in the garden and gardening has become her passion.



Bevil Lucas lives in the CGH occupation, named after civil rights leader and anti-apartheid activist Zainunnisa 'Cissie' Gool from District Six in Cape Town. He has been involved in the trade union movement for many years and in various social organisations, including the anti-apartheid movement. In CGH he is involved in the co-design project for the future of the occupation site.

SOWING THE SEEDS OF COMMUNITY

weeds that snake in-between the brinjals, then
twist between my fingertips
dirt staining my hands, grubby muddy lovely fingernails
Melissa's voice sings – she's queen of the garden, plant fairy
granting wishes in the form of seeds
buried dirt-deep the depth of my thumb
permaculture tumbling from her tongue to my hands
turning bottles upside down
water-weighted, wavy, what a scary reflection if i was a cat
but they don't mind
they're busy on the walls
dodging barbed wire with nimble flexy spines
spying from above
Table Mountain with blue all behind
a whisper of wind
around the leaves of the lemon tree.
winter's coming soon.
it rained all morning yesterday
but now the soil is dry
and making its way around my pants
at the knees, coming up to my wrists
teasing the end of my shovel as
i put all my weight into it
my hair looks terrible
it's a garden of women with ideas
blooming next to the tomatoes
enshrined within and between fences, the gate,
windows cracked or glassless
big bags of topsoil ready to be scooped
laundry hung out to dry
Melissa shows me how to put the roots in the soil,
gentle and firm, so they'll last.

Anonymous garden comrade



Background to Cissie Gool House

According to the 2022 census, there are over 55,000 homeless people in South Africa, about 10,000 of these in the Western Cape. However, with the passage of time and due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is thought that the real numbers may be higher. In response to the government's insufficient response to the growing homelessness crisis, a group of housing activists, students and homeless people decided that it was time to take action. The Old Woodstock Hospital in Cape Town became one of two sites chosen by the *Reclaim The City (RTC)* campaign to occupy in response to the growing trend of *gentrification* and lack of affordable housing. A committee was formed to interview prospective occupants. These should be people who were facing the threat of eviction from their current residence, could not afford their current rent or had been rendered homeless. They also had to understand what was expected of them. The building already had running water and electricity, but it was necessary to set up various processes so that the community could become self-reliant. For example, cleaning crews were needed to make the building habitable, and a community kitchen had to be set up to help ensure that people had enough to eat. The main intention was to raise awareness about the housing and homelessness problem in the city, and to educate people about their rights in relation to housing. Many people used to make the long trek from the Cape Flats to work in the city centre every day. Now, some of them could live in the city. The activists renamed the building *Cissie Gool House (CGH)* after Zainunnisa 'Cissie' Gool, the anti-apartheid political and civil rights leader, and a new experiment in self-sustainable living was born. This article focuses on one important component of CGH – the community garden.

CGH was originally intended for 1,000 inhabitants, but currently houses closer to 1,500. One of the main challenges faced is how all the people can feed themselves in an environment that is still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and an economy that is under strain from the ongoing

problems of electricity outages, high unemployment, homelessness and crime. One important project initiated to help tackle this problem was the community garden. Within an atmosphere of learning from social action, the residents look at CGH as a place of homecoming, self-learning, collective care, self-sufficiency, and solidarity. The knowledge that guides and drives the community is rooted within the community; it is shared and local. This article tells the story of how the garden was set up and how it is run, providing employment for residents within the informal economy. It tells the story of how it was founded based on the principle that whoever works the land should benefit from the labour.

The community garden

It was not long before the challenge of providing regular food to the community became apparent. In response to this challenge, the idea for a community food garden emerged, and it was decided to start it within the existing neglected and overgrown garden of CGH. It was named the Noor Tofie Food Garden after one of the first people who set up the garden and has, sadly, since passed away.

Melissa Arendse came to live in CGH in August 2019 and gave birth to a daughter, Cassidy, there during the COVID-19 pandemic in December the same year. She is a monitor in the garden and recounts that:

When lockdown for COVID-19 started, I was introduced to working in the garden as part of the feeding scheme in the CGH community. At the time people could earn points for their work that could be translated into a small income. This was initiated by organisations who gave training regarding permaculture. I felt that the garden was my calling not only because I could be kept busy with a toddler at my heels, but also my realisations as an adult learner about the relationship of the earth and society, [as well as] the relationship between nature and humanity and my role as a steward.

Among the various work teams set up to manage tasks in CGH, a Veggie Gardening Team was set up comprising of 12 people. It consisted of a mix of people from within and without CGH who were interested to be part of the team, which was often women-led. Noor Tofie started the initiative independently, but when people showed interest in what he was doing, a task team was assigned of which Melissa Arendse was part. Noor had cleared the first space for the garden, and this later was expanded on by the task team.

While outside organisations such as Development Action Group and Upliftment Project supported the project through food donations, there was always a strong belief that the garden needed to be self-reliant. Some of the food produced in the garden was donated to the community kitchen as a contribution to feed those in need. Outside organisations also supported through the provision of training in areas such as permaculture, garden design, compost making and seasonal planting. They also donated seeds and equipment. Before long, the garden was producing a wide range of produce, including spinach, spring onions, herbs and medicinal plants, among others.

Germinating the idea of the garden

The community food garden was started as a way to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in our community. In a sense, it was *guerrilla gardening* as part of our protest regarding the right of land and ownership, and the right to plant on land that had remained inactive for two decades. In the beginning, it was dependent on the goodwill of individuals swapping seeds who were attending workshops in places like the *Oude Molen Eco Village* in Pinelands, Cape Town. This workshop focused on areas such as education and empowerment for self-sustainability, as well as urban farming methods, such as permaculture.

Immediately following this workshop people became active – putting the ideas into practice, and they started looking at the viability of planting a garden at CGH. Not everyone was prepared to get dirty in the soil to help clear out spaces

for the garden to be planted, but enough residents participated to see the idea become a reality.

Bevil Lucas is one of the organisers in CGH. He reflects on the experience of setting up the garden:

I am often reminded of how the garden at CGH started. Boeta¹ Noor Tofie (better known by most of us as Oupa²) was the founder member of the garden back in early 2019. He was my opposite neighbour, my comrade and dearest friend. He lived in Room 12 on the ground floor, and I lived in Room 15 with my son, elderly father, and my Uncle John. Oupa was a short, elderly, active and very assertive man who was very passionate about the garden. He used to wake up and start his day at 5a.m. in the garden, and work until midday. After a few days he had cleared all the tall weeds and shrubbery. I questioned the 'oldie' about his interest in the garden. At first, he shared with me that the garden had become his place of comfort, of healing and a kind of quiet retreat. It made him feel like he had a sense of belonging, and a sense of ownership. Not long thereafter, the garden became a safe and comforting space for a few more elderly occupiers – Mamma Rose who lived on the ground floor, Gogo Virginia who lived on the first floor, as well as Boeta Ebrahim Januarie and Uncle John from the ground floor. We renamed the garden Noor Tofie Food Garden after Oupa passed away.

Karen Hendricks, one of the founding members of CGH, also recalls the setting up of the garden:

Days and weeks passed amid concerns and discussions about the wellness of the elderly [in CGH] and [talks of setting up] the garden space. Bernice, a comrade, supporter, and friend of the garden came and shared her extensive knowledge, love, skills, and experience with everyone. Within a few days the first compost beds were made. The first official launch of the garden was on Easter Monday in April 2019. What a memorable day. It started with storytelling and ended with a



Re-naming of the garden event

walking tour of the garden. It was then too that the shared vision of the garden space was birthed. By November 2019, the first garden fundraiser was held.

What we learned in the process

In the beginning, we were fortunate enough to be able to draw on the assistance and knowledge from residents like Boeta Noor and Bernice Roeland, who shared their knowledge about medicinal and indigenous herbs and plants. They knew which plants would grow best in the clay soil of Mountain Road, and which plants would do well in the local weather conditions. We also learned that everything is connected – landscape and people. It is all in harmony. They taught us how to

recycle the waste from the kitchen to make fertiliser. We also had to contend with cats who were causing damage in the garden – we learned that water bottles could be used that reflect light and scare the cats away. Netting was erected in strategic spots to protect the garden from wind. Some spots had the ideal sunlight for growing our seedlings, while others were suitable for planting.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, many residents of CGH were affected. It created a lot of additional challenges. The communal kitchen received pots of food from the local community, which they distributed to people in CGH. All of this had to be done while observing the strict lockdown rules and ensuring social distancing. It put a lot of strain on the community. But the COVID-19 times forced us to learn to plan better, and to involve more volunteers in the occupation in the garden. Fortunately,

residents were not too severely affected by COVID-19, and we came through stronger and wiser.

We learned that we could make tea from *African Wormwood* and prepare *Spekboom*³ and garlic chutneys to help stay healthy. People often added these plants and herbs to their *Reclaim Your Festive Box*, a gift box that was sold to generate income. The income generated could be used to buy compost, seeds and seedlings. We re-learned that *Malva*⁴ could be crushed and used for earache, and that the indigenous *wild garlic* was good for coughs, colds, flu, fevers, tuberculosis, asthma, and as a remedy for intestinal worms. It also produces an odour that helps keep snakes away. The food garden helped to focus our attention away from the pandemic and the frustrating confinement that came with it. It created a sense of peacefulness and escape. It enabled us to regain our centre as a collective.

Everything worthwhile comes with challenges

One of the early challenges faced in setting up the garden was getting people to learn to cooperate with each other. The task team even fell apart at one stage. However, a new task team was soon formed with new members. Through increased efforts in areas like cooperation and conflict resolution, this group learned to work together. Gradually, they were able to work more effectively.

Only a small number of individuals contribute to the garden in order to help ensure the food security of all. There are ongoing efforts to encourage different groups to join in, with mixed results. There is a need for ongoing sensitisation of community members about the importance of the garden to the overall project. All of the other task teams are important too (e.g. the security and safety team), but the garden is pivotal to ensuring the sustainability of the project.

It is also time-consuming to maintain the garden, and it is a challenge for people to devote time when they have other duties to take care of (e.g. family, income generating work).

Where are we now?

We have learned that our plans were a bit over-ambitious. People are busy. They have many other responsibilities. So, we need to work out a system that is feasible with people's available time. Melissa and her family have taken over as *champions* of the garden. They have been able to draw in a few others, but it is still not enough. We need more volunteers. If we had more people, we could plant more. At the moment, we have to adapt the size of the garden to the available workforce. But this means that there is less food for the community kitchen. The kitchen used to cook food twice a week, but now they can only do it once. After the end of the COVID-19 lockdown, there are fewer unemployed people available to work in the garden. Even though many people do short-term and precarious jobs, they are still less available to help out. CGH has become much quieter during the day, after people go out to work in the morning. You notice that it becomes vibrant again in the afternoon as people return from work.

Looking to the future

The work in the garden started out focusing on small sections that we could plant in. But there is still a huge area that is filled with rubble, and which was used as a dumping ground before CGH was occupied. We would like the City of Cape Town to assist us with clearing it. We also need community volunteers to help us to sort the plastic and recyclables from the wood and other trash. Recycling can be an additional source of income-generation.

We are also applying to use a fallow plot of land near CGH that receives ample sunlight and can be used for planting leafy vegetables and salad crops. Ideally, we would like to be able to produce enough food both for the community kitchen and for income-generation. However, as already mentioned, it is a challenge to find enough volunteers. If we could produce more, we could sell at a monthly farmers' market to generate income to buy more garden supplies and seedlings.

Water is also a challenge. We would like to install large tanks to conserve water, which is especially needed during the hot summer months. Finally, we would like to collaborate with other community gardens, university students and others to exchange and learn from each other. The garden is part of the local community of Woodstock. We would like the whole community to get involved – garden enthusiasts, volunteers, schools, retirement homes, etc. Through the garden, we want to help create awareness about the importance of locally produced goods and supporting the local informal economy. The CGH Noor Tofie Food Garden was created harnessing the knowledge and experience from within the community. It is inspired by the principles of social action, solidarity, self-governance and cooperation. It is a response to the growing need for local communities to work towards food security and sovereignty, and to break the reliance on outside food chains. We hope that the garden has a positive impact on our ecosystem and is a place of knowledge and learning. It is part of our broader campaign to reclaim unused spaces around Cape Town and use them in a way that responds to community needs for housing and food. With cooperation and vision, we can become more self-reliant and create a society where food security and sovereignty are in the hands of local communities.



Endnotes

- 1 Boeta is an honorific in Afrikaans that is used for an elderly male person.
- 2 Oupa is an Afrikaans word that means grandfather.
- 3 The Afrikaans word translates to 'bacon tree' in English. This South African plant is also referred to as 'elephant bush' as it forms part of their diet. It is used as food and medicine, especially for skin conditions.
- 4 Mallow, a plant common in Southern Africa, that is used as food and medicine to treat disorders of the skin, gastrointestinal tract and respiratory tract.

THE ROLE OF COOPERATIVES IN FIGHTING FOOD INSECURITY IN TUNISIA



Karim Chebbi is a sociology/ demography researcher specialising in cooperatives. A former IT geek and practitioner, he is passionate about history and informative, critical journalism. He is currently a project manager at DGRV (the German Confederation of Cooperatives) Tunisian section.



Livestock: Tibar sheep – Montassar UCPA

Introduction

This article focuses on the role of cooperatives and adult learning and education (ALE) in Tunisia at a time of increasing global food insecurity. The article argues in favour of a food sovereignty system by using the example of the Cooperative Units for Agricultural Production (UCPAs). These cooperatives act as a 'community of practice'¹ – they support the education of farmers and help to liberate them from dependence on corporations and market institutions that presently control the global food system.

Cooperatives in context

According to the World Food Programme's (WFP) Global Operational Response Plan (2024) – '[e]nding world hunger is one of the greatest challenges of our time. The convergence of multiple crises – conflict, extreme climate patterns and economic shocks – is driving hunger, eroding livelihoods, and entrenching

vulnerabilities especially in the worst hit food crisis countries². In the current context of an enormous global food³ and livelihoods crisis, collective farming is emerging as part of the fight against global hunger. As far back as 2012, the WFP stated that 'agricultural cooperatives [are the] key to feeding the world'⁴.



Harvest 2020: Festival of Golden Thorns – Montassar UCPA

Therefore, one can argue that UCPAs are an essential pillar of global agricultural production. UCPAs form a local community food system; they produce *from* the resources of the community and *for* the needs of the community. A cooperative is less vulnerable to the possible disruption of supply chains and logistics and more protective of the environment. Communal or collective land ownership in Tunisia dates back

many years⁵ and the formation of cooperative farms and agricultural cooperatives to the 1950s. All cooperatives fall under a general statute, which is favourable to their development. In addition, there are also specific laws existing alongside the general statute which apply to the six different categories of cooperative types⁶. The UCPAs cooperatives bring together farmers who have the right of *usufruct*⁷ of state-owned agricultural land. According to the Tunisian Code of Real Rights: '*usufruit des terres domaniales*' refers to the right of these cooperatives to enjoy and use the land without owning it. In other words, farmers and communities can benefit from the fruits of production of the land.

From food security to food sovereignty

The UCPA follows government guidelines, which prohibit the use of pesticides and attempt to use more eco-responsible methods. Despite a severe lack of resources, UCPAs demonstrate and hope for a different kind of agriculture – towards people and their most urgent needs, towards nature, towards a food-sovereign agriculture. This means going beyond food security⁸, which focuses on the provision of food for all by whatever means necessary, whether by local production or global imports. Economic policies concerned with food security typically favour industrial farming that can produce more food that costs less. The 'where' it comes from and the 'how' it is produced are not deemed important. Food sovereignty is essentially a political concept and movements to reclaim sovereignty over food have existed around the world for centuries. La Vía Campesina⁹ coined the term *food sovereignty* and introduced the right of food sovereignty at the World Food Summit in 1996 as "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through sustainable methods and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems"¹⁰. Food sovereignty is concerned with the right of people to determine their own food and agricultural policies independently, meeting their own interests and without harming the interests of others.



Training on plants – UCPA

This right may include:

- the right to a fair and decent income for local producers and any other actor throughout the value chain and the supply of this food;
- the right to good quality and socially/culturally acceptable food;
- the right of access to an equitable distribution of the means of production;
- the right of access to eco-responsible fair agricultural trade that meets the needs of communities, while allowing local producers and other actors to live with dignity.

ALE and cooperatives

In addition to their undeniable economic role, cooperatives also play an important socio-cultural and educational role for members. Cooperative members, many of whom cannot read or write, acquire knowledge and skills through peer learning with other members. Even though all adults have knowledge and skills, the older, more experienced members of the cooperatives assist newer members with new learning. As one actively participates in a specific group, one learns how things are done in that context. This kind of learning is an example of a *community of practice*. The learning is also an example of

situated learning. Situated learning is about the connection between learning and a particular space, time and people (the social situation). The learning cannot be separated from the situation or context in which it happens. The 'on-the-job' training that occurs in the cooperatives – referred to as 'field schools' – can involve complex technical issues. Specialists, such as agricultural engineers and occupational safety experts, are often called on to share their expertise in these situations¹¹. Currently the learning that happens is informal and non-formal. There is a need for more formalised ALE, for example agricultural courses that focus on cooperatives offered by professional institutions. Members could attain a certificate or diploma qualification. Apprenticeships should also be considered.

Conclusion

The UCPA cooperatives are *learning and doing* entities. They are an example of how a grouping can collaborate by sharing knowledge, skills and values in a continual learning/action/reflection cycle. Despite their marginalisation, the UCPA cooperatives could play a vital role going forward as the global food crisis intensifies. With their focus on collective farming and food sovereignty, they could become a beacon of hope and resilience in Tunisia in the fight against global hunger.

Endnotes

- 1 The concept was first proposed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger in their book *Situated Learning* (1991). 'Communities of practice are self-organized and selected groups of people who share a common sense of purpose and a desire to learn and know what each other knows' (Lave and Wenger 1991; Brown and Gray 1995; Brown and Duguid 1996; Wenger 1998 in Hansman, 2001).
- 2 <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000156760/download/?ga=2.191834146.96024303.1713604175-637247278.1713604175>
- 3 There is a risk of reaching a new high of 943 million people facing severe food insecurity by 2025. By 2028, the global severely food insecure population is projected to hit 956 million <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/agfood/food-security-trends-2024-and-beyond>
- 4 Theme for World Food Day 2012.
- 5 In 1901, a decree introduced the legal framework for the identification of these lands and their delimitation through local administrative committees. Law No. 64-28 of 1964 explicitly recognised the right of ownership of the communities that use communal lands. Since the 1960s communal lands have nearly halved because of privatisation <https://arablandinitiative.gltm.net/countries/tunisia>
- 6 <https://coops4dev.coop/en/4devafrica/tunisia>
- 7 Usufruct is a limited real right found in civil law and mixed jurisdictions that unites the two property interests of *usus* and *fructus*: *Usus* (use, as in usage of or access to) is the right to use or enjoy a thing possessed, directly and without altering it. *Fructus* (fruit, as in the fruits of production) is the right to derive profit from a thing possessed: for instance, by selling crops, leasing immovables or annexed movables, taxing for entry, and so on (Wikipedia). For further information, see <https://www.jurisitetunisie.com/tunisie/codes/cdr/cdr1120.htm>
- 8 Food security – “when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (United Nations World Food Summit, 1996).
- 9 La Vía Campesina (Spanish: *la vía campesina*: the peasant way) is an international farmers organisation founded in 1993 in Belgium – it describes itself as “an international movement which coordinates peasant organizations of small and middle-scale producers, agricultural workers, rural women, and indigenous communities from Asia, Africa, America, and Europe” <https://viacampesina.org/en/>
- 10 Annex III: Reports on the Round Tables, the Multistakeholder Dialogue and the Parallel Events: The World Food Summit Plan of Action, 2002 <https://www.fao.org/3/Y7106E/Y7106E04.htm>
- 11 Fifth Cooperative Principle: Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation <https://ica.coop/en/cooperatives/cooperative-identity>



Inauguration of Stable 2021 – Montassar UCPA

ALE AS A RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD INSECURITY IN THE SAHEL



Mr Mamadou Mariko holds a Master's degree in History and Geography from the École Normale Supérieure of Bamako. After working for 15 years in the field of rural development, particularly adult training, he specialised in the field of climate change by obtaining a Specialised Higher Studies Diploma from the University of California, Davis, United States. This specialisation is supplemented by several advanced training courses in Mali including training on 'risk reduction, disasters and adaptation to climate change', among others.

Mr Mariko is the author of several reports on Communal Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change and on the Environmental and Social Management Plan for many decentralised regions of Mali. His work in communication includes being the author of more than 20 awareness-raising and documentary films on development projects in Mali.



Local villager collecting water

Introduction

This article argues for the importance of adult learning and education (ALE) in the Sahel as a response to the impacts of climate change, including food insecurity. It explains the need for education and training, including important steps in the process prior to the training sessions, such as information-sharing, diagnosis of problems, among others. It also proposes what the sessions could incorporate.

Background

The Sahel countries – Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Niger and Chad – have an economy primarily based on agriculture, livestock and fishing. These countries are among the poorest and least developed in the world, and many people in the region still depend on subsistence farming for their survival. In recent years, their lives and livelihoods are under threat from the worsening impacts of climate change. The degradation of soil and plant cover and the progressive drying up of rivers and lakes are just some of the most visible impacts of this. The region is

also affected by a low level of basic infrastructure (e.g. roads, electricity, drinking water, sanitation and schools, etc.). Food security is an ongoing problem for much of the population.

This situation has been aggravated by a multidimensional crisis marked by attacks of armed groups in almost all countries in the region, a situation which arose following the destabilisation of Libya in 2011. The COVID-19 pandemic and endemic political instability in countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad have further exacerbated the situation.

The rationale for adult education on climate change in the Sahel

The Sahel region is divided into four principal agro-climatic zones:

- i. The Saharan desert zone in the northernmost part, where nomadic livestock farming and agriculture are practised in areas with low pressure, wind, cloud and rain.

- ii. The Sahel zone which is characterised by particular hydrological and ecological conditions (i.e. many flooded areas allow irrigated rainfed agriculture for part of the year).
- iii. The Sudanese zone, characterised by dense and varied vegetation cover (Sudanese savannah). The climate is marked by very high temperatures (up to 45°C in the north) and alternates annually between a rainy season and a long dry season. Precipitation decreases from south to north following a general trend noted for the past five decades.
- iv. The pre-Guinean zone which covers part of Southern Mali and Burkina Faso, and which has higher rainfall than the other climatic zones (1,000 to 1,100mm per year).

Climate change, which is becoming more severe year by year, is having a significant impact in all of these zones. Increasingly short and delayed rainy seasons, high winds, severe droughts and unexpected floods are becoming the norm. These trends are undermining the resilience of the local population. The traditional methods of securing livelihoods are no longer sufficient and living conditions across the region are deteriorating as a result. Ecologically fragile rural communities that are prone to drought are particularly affected, with communities of herders and farmers bearing the brunt of the effects. Every year, chronic food insecurity is affecting thousands of people. The benefits of community development investments are being largely wiped out by the increasingly frequent food crises caused by drought.

Aware of the magnitude of the problem, the government, development partners and civil society organisations have initiated numerous policies and projects to strengthen the resilience of the population against climate change. However, in the absence of effective coordination and cooperation between the various stakeholders on the ground, efforts are fragmentary, and the impacts of these well-intentioned initiatives are not visible in the lives of the local communities. This lack of coordination and communication is further exacerbated by a lack of *ownership* of



Half-moons for reclaiming degraded land

the projects by the local population, who are the intended beneficiaries of the initiatives. Furthermore, an analytical framework to help communities understand the root causes of the problem is lacking. As a result, they do not always make the connection between climate change, poverty and food insecurity.

Faced with these negative effects, the need to develop effective plans for adapting to climate change, that can secure the livelihoods of local communities and preserve the gains of community development initiatives, has become an urgent issue. Within this, a key priority is to build the capacity of the most vulnerable groups and communities. Community leaders and members must be trained to adapt their traditional means of livelihood to the new reality of a world with climate change. As rural communities can easily come together in groups of five to thirty villages, there is great potential to reach significant numbers of people with such training.

Education and training prerequisites

One of the fundamental principles of adult education (and indeed all education) is the motivation of the learner. They must understand and believe in the reason for learning something. This motivation is reinforced if the learning is oriented towards solving problems and addressing matters that concern them. Therefore, for the training to be successful, the first prerequisite is to raise the awareness of participants

(e.g. local elected officials, producers, farmers' organisations, civil society organisations, etc.) on how climate change is a key factor affecting their lives. This will allow them to better understand the problem and the importance of the training and will ease the implementation of the subsequent phases of the training.

After provision of information and awareness-raising, a participatory diagnosis of the issue must be conducted to identify which sub-sectors (e.g. agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing, etc.) and local resources are most affected by climate change. Using various participatory tools, the environmental and socio-economic impacts can be identified, as well as the most vulnerable groups and the different risk levels. This process allows for the discussion of various practices and adaptations that can be implemented by the community to combat and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Since it is probably not practical to implement all of these measures at once, the next step is to prioritise them and decide which ones will be implemented first. Here again, there are numerous participatory tools available that can be used for analysis and ranking. There are various things to consider in this process, such as:

- i. The potential of the measure to have a positive and significant impact on the problem.
- ii. Cost (if this is too high, it may not be feasible).
- iii. Impact on the environment (e.g. stockpiling of fodder for livestock to get through the Sahel's long dry

season is generally considered a positive practice, but if immature grasses are cut too often in the same area, it may result in desertification).

- iv. Socio-cultural impact (i.e. even an effective measure may be rejected by a community if it clashes with local customs and traditions).
- v. Availability of local resources (e.g. building of stone barriers may be effective against floods, but it is not practical in an area where stones are not readily available). The measures adopted should be feasible with the locally available resources – physical and human.

This analysis, when implemented effectively, will lead to the selection of suitable adaptation and mitigation measures that are relevant and feasible for a given area. The nature and number of these measures will guide the subsequent design of the training modules that the community needs.

The training

After the stages of information-sharing and awareness raising, diagnosis of problems, selection of adaptation and mitigation options and their prioritisation, comes the step of designing training sessions. Here we must consider three essential aspects:

- i. **The availability of the participants:** Since the training of community leaders on good practices of adaptation to climate change is mainly intended for rural people, it is necessary to carry out the activity during the dry season so as not to disturb the farmers during the short rainy season in the Sahel when they are busy with work.
- ii. **Criteria for selection of training participants:** Participants should be people who are trusted by the village community and can be depended on to replicate and cascade the training. They should also be community members who are not likely to leave the community any time soon. It is not an essential criterion, but it is recommended that they have at least basic reading and writing skills, whatever the language. Belonging to the family of the



Building rock formations to prevent rainwater runoff and trap fertile soil

chief or the mayor should *not* be the criterion for choosing the participant.

- iii. **Respect for gender:** The training should not be exclusively for men. As women are among the group most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, they should be well-represented in the training.

Those organising the training can suggest the selection criteria, but must not interfere in the choice of participants, which is the exclusive responsibility of the community and the municipality. In addition to representatives from the communities, other potential participants include municipal councillors and representatives of the technical services of the government. In general, the sessions should take place at the local district capital or any other locality of the district that is easy to access and offers amenities for meetings of this kind.

A participatory approach

Effective adult education and training requires good interaction between the participants on the one hand and between the participants and the trainer on the other. Thus, the trainer abandons their position as a *teacher* to become a facilitator or a moderator. They *facilitate* relations in the group. Adults are active contributors to their own education and training. Therefore, the role of the facilitator is not to *transmit* knowledge, but rather to propose situations that will allow learning to take place. Participants in adult learning arrive with a wealth of

prior knowledge and life experience, which must be valued and taken into account in the training. The trainer *facilitates* the link between the learner and the training content (knowledge, know-how, interpersonal skills). It is also essential to highlight the links between what is learned and the daily life of the learner.

Given the low adult literacy rate in the Sahel, discussions should be held in local languages during sessions held in rural areas. Also, for a better appropriation of the training content, emphasis should be placed on practical demonstrations – the programme should devote time to field trips where the theoretical content of the modules can be applied in real life situations.

Modules proposal

The facilitator should develop modules based on the problems and priorities identified during the diagnostic phase. In the context of the Sahel, these options relate to adaptation to or mitigation of the impacts of climate change in various areas related to agriculture, livestock, fisheries, drinking water supply, forest resources, etc. Before introducing the modules, it is important for the facilitator to discuss some of the principal concepts and terms related to climate change with the participants. Among others, these include *vulnerability, resilience, adaptation, mitigation, exposure, susceptibility, greenhouse gases* and *extreme weather events*. Discussions should also focus on the consequences of climate change, and strategies and measures that can be used to adapt to and mitigate these. Following this, the facilitator can present the various

training modules, adapted for the geographical area and the needs of the participants. These may include:

- **Sustainable land management:** Sustainable land management technologies include use of *half-moons*¹, *stone bunds*², *fascines*³, *filtering dikes*⁴, *zai*⁵, etc. The implementation of these innovations makes it possible to fight against water and wind erosion, to rehabilitate marginal or degraded land and to increase soil fertility, among others. One good practice in the field of agriculture is the establishment of **peasant field schools** where farmers can be trained in the use of improved agricultural methods and new farming techniques adapted to the context of climate change. In addition to this innovation, the introduction of the use of improved seeds that are adapted to the shorter rainy season can also be beneficial. By using a combination of these measures, agricultural production can be increased and food insecurity reduced.
- **Improved livestock farming:** For livestock herders, some good practices to combat climate change include reducing the size of herds, better genetic selection of cattle, growing fodder crops and the development of grazing areas.
- **Strengthening income-generating activities for women:** Given that women are among the most vulnerable groups affected by climate change, income-generating activities for women should be prioritised. For example, the development of market gardening, sale of agricultural and sustainable non-timber forest products and the provision of microcredit should be promoted, among others.
- **Improvement of fishing:** With the decrease in available surface water, the promotion of fish farming using fishponds and pools and the deepening and stocking of fishponds are measures that can help.



Small pits called Zais are dug pre-season to capture scarce rainwater



Training in the processing of non-wood market garden and forest products



Market gardening is used to generate income and improve nutrition

- Forestry management:** Conservation, reforestation, tree planting and the promotion of non-timber forest products (through the establishment and equipping of local manufacturing centres) are some of the possible mitigation measures. The processing of non-timber forest products helps to add value alongside other harvested products and increases women's incomes. The same centres can be used to process and preserve agricultural products for the lean season.
- Sand dune stabilisation:** Climate change has accelerated the process of desertification leading to the advance of dunes on dwellings, rivers and fields. One of the most effective methods of combating this is the stabilisation of dunes by, among other things, planting plants such as *Euphorbia balsamifera* or *Leptadenia pyrotechnica* which can be grown easily from cuttings.
- Combating the water crisis in the Sahel:** As the water table is becoming increasingly depleted, it is necessary to drill boreholes to supply drinking water for people and livestock. The Sahel is one of the largest livestock grazing areas in Africa. The construction of micro dams is another measure that can be used to retain water during the long dry season.

There are many good practices for adapting to climate change. Which ones to use depend on the climatic

zone, as well as the nature and degree of resource allocation by the development sector. Only a diagnosis can determine which practices are suitable for a particular area. A thorough grounding in the theoretical concepts of combating climate change should be followed by a practical phase. This can be done in two ways: (i) practical exercises can take place in the fields of the training participants, and/or (ii) study trips can be organised to visit other areas and conduct exchanges with people who are already implementing some of these measures.

Multi-year planning

As one of the objectives of adult education is to find sustainable solutions to concrete problems, any adult training session focusing on good practices for adapting to climate change must include multi-year planning. Measures to combat climate change often take more than a single year to have a sustainable impact. The plan should include objectives and expected results for each measure that is to be implemented, as well as an indicative timeframe and geographical location for the implementation. The plan must also be accompanied by a detailed budget showing annual costs and outlining the contribution of the various actors (e.g. family, village, municipality, government, other partners, etc.). Finally, a monitoring and evaluation plan which allows the actors themselves to periodically evaluate the progress of their measures is needed.

Conclusion

Training adults on good practices for adaptation to climate change in the Sahel is not an activity that should take place in isolation. As we have seen, it must be preceded by various other activities such as information-sharing, diagnosis of problems and selection of adaptation measures. It must also be followed by concrete actions based on action plans drawn up in a participatory manner. The ultimate goal of the training is to help reduce the vulnerability and strengthen the capacity and resilience of rural communities in the Sahel to combat the impacts of climate change, which has become an undeniable reality in today's world. Only by addressing the effects of climate change and adapting to their impacts can we mitigate the problem of food insecurity that is affecting more and more communities across the continent every year. Adult education is a key tool at our disposal in this battle.

Endnotes

- 1 Semi-circular structures made of compacted earth or stones with openings perpendicular to the direction of water flow used for rain-water retention for dry and degraded soils.
- 2 Linear stone constructions that are used to slow rainwater runoff and trap fertile soil.
- 3 Structures of interlaced branches used as dams and to slow down the impacts of soil erosion.
- 4 Stone dams used to regulate water flow and slow down soil erosion.
- 5 Small pits dug in the soil during the pre-season to capture scarce rainwater.



Training on Dune Fixation

ADULT EXTENSION PRACTITIONERS' CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS IN BOTSWANA



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Introduction

This article focuses on a *Special Diploma Programme in Agricultural Extension* which ran from 2014 until 2022 at the Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN).

The programme, for adult extension practitioners (AEPs), sought to address issues of food insecurity in Botswana, among others. The programme ended because the Ministry of Agriculture, which had requested it, could no longer sponsor their staff. This article starts by briefly looking at food insecurity, then at the special diploma programme and how it sought to address this very important issue.

What is food insecurity?

The results of a study by Statistics Botswana (2023) indicate that '53.29% of the population was affected by moderate or severe food insecurity in 2021/22, out of which 27.13% were affected by moderate food insecurity and 26.16% were affected by severe food insecurity. This translates to about 46.71% of the population being food secure to mildly food insecure'¹.

Several factors contribute to food insecurity, including a lack of access to or limited access to food because of the absence of low or irregular income; migration from rural to urban areas; and low food production caused by unreliable rainfall, prolonged drought and/or high temperatures due to climate change. Other factors include inadequate technology and infrastructure availability for food production, and pests and diseases.

Despite the government of Botswana providing subsidies and international organisations providing support for the farming system to address food

insecurity, poverty and malnutrition still exist. This problem is not unique to Botswana, and studies have shown that food insecurity is a global concern, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic (Buheji et al., 2020).

Botswana is among the 193 United Nations member countries that endorsed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The second of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aims to end hunger, achieve food security, and improve nutrition while promoting sustainable agriculture. The Botswana government has developed several strategies to address this. Asefa (1991) refers to the National Food Strategy with its long-term goal of increasing food security through improved agricultural production and a diversified rural economy, and a short-term goal of providing food security to the country's most vulnerable people.

The Role of AEPs

The link between adult education and agricultural development has always been strong and continues to be so. The principles of adult learning, such as self-directedness, the learner's need to know, and readiness to learn are traits that are commonly found among agricultural groups. Furthermore, farmers, like other adult learners, choose when and if they would like to attend trainings. The learning must be relevant and useful to their everyday lives and livelihoods.

In Botswana, the contribution made by AEPs to developing community food systems and, therefore, to the attainment of food security is critical. AEPs serve as frontline professionals acting as a support to communities through creating awareness; disseminating knowledge based on research; demonstrating skills, such as control measures for

pests affecting crops, among others. They offer practical assistance and psychological, emotional, and cognitive support. Indraningsih et al. (2023) and Post (2011) state that AEPs as educators provide much-needed awareness and education to stakeholders in food systems, such as technical guidance; management, etc. A number of scholars (Abdu, 2016; Brenya & Zhu, 2023) argue that AEPs play a pivotal role in helping farmers increase agricultural production and, therefore, contribute to the attainment of food security.

BUAN and the Special Diploma Programme

In order to contribute to a strategy to strengthen food security in the country, in 2014 BUAN came to an agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture to develop a two-year diploma programme for upgrading extension officers from a certificate to a diploma level. This special agricultural extension programme, housed within the Department of Agricultural Education, Extension and Rural Development, started in the academic year 2014/15. It was designed to empower AEPs to help to address farmers' challenges related to food security.



Kgalapitse farmers gathered for a demonstration conducted by BUAN AEPs

Each course in the programme offered different competencies as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: AEP competencies

- Empowerment education for discussions and problem solving.
- Leadership skills for self-knowledge.
- Develop place-informed education.
- Strengths-based learning based on questioning and appreciating colleagues and community experiences.
- Communication (publicising farm activities, person-to-person writing, class reports).
- Problem solving and decision-making.
- Computer-based skills through information research.
- Teamwork through cooperation and collaboration with village leaders, Dikgosi (Chiefs), agriculture demonstrators, local companies and food supply chain stores.
- Experiential learning.
- Self-directedness.
- Community development knowledge.
- Ability to form partnerships through participatory learning.
- Farmer-to-farmer learning: sharing ideas and experience.
- Needs assessments.

Source: Compiled from Diploma in Extension Education (DEE) courses (2014) and former students (based on Pamphilon, 2017)

The programme allowed farming communities within a 30km radius of BUAN to work with BUAN/AEPs in building community food systems to help address food insecurity and improve livelihoods. For example, a course called *Extension Projects* was offered on a practicum basis to assist in building capacity for the local farming community and to expose AEPs to real life community food systems' experiences.

Former students interviewed for this article revealed that AEPs used practical methods such as 'farmer profiling surveys' to identify challenges affecting agricultural production systems. One student indicated that a course called *Development Communications* prepared them for community profiling and participation in development organisations, while *Computer Studies* introduced them to the use of computers to access data and information for extension purposes.

On reflection, students reported that the active engagement promoted cooperative and teamwork strategies. A course called *Principles of Extension and Comparative Extension Education* dealt with extension methods, approaches, and their applications via the linking of extension stakeholders to partnerships and collaboration.

The diploma programme promoted links between the farming community and the university course developers and instructors. AEPs can transfer knowledge from the classroom to 'real' life and identify and solve problems faced by farmers and the community in a participatory way (e.g. crop pest infestation affecting food production).

Through this diploma programme, AEPs contributed to community development by using participatory extension approaches appropriate to agricultural development. There is also an opportunity for the dissemination of research findings to more farmers in the future.

AEPs in action

The class of 2021/22 conducted surveys to identify challenges faced by farmers in Matebeleng, Dikgonnye and Malotwane villages. One of the problems identified was the inaccessibility to funding for production and marketing. This was found to be due to inadequate information dissemination – a failure to sufficiently equip the farmers with information about potential funding institutions and viable marketing strategies. In response to this, the BUAN programme AEPs conducted

a one-day workshop entitled *Linking Farmers to the Market for Horticulture*. It was attended by prospective local funding organisations, markets and supermarkets such as Spar, Sefalana Hyper and Choppies, and the Ministry of Education and Skills Development.

Another example of the important work that AEPs do was the farm field demonstration conducted by the class of 2022/23 at Kgalapitse village in the Oodi village extension area. This was carried out in partnership with stakeholders, such as Bosa Bosele Training Institute, Agri-Chem Distributing Company and the District Agriculture Extension Office of the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food Security. This activity demonstrated skills linked to the control of anthills in crop fields under the theme *Twants'ho diji mo dijalong* ('pest control in field crops'). The AEPs demonstrated the process of destroying anthills, and the positive results of this for agricultural production. Through this field demonstration, farmers learned how to control ant colonies in crop fields. They learned that the most important thing when destroying anthills from a crop field is to destroy the queen far below the anthill. The demonstration showed that this is an easily achievable and affordable strategy.



Field demonstration by BUAN AEPs at Kgalapitse village, near Oodi



Identification of colony of insect pests dug from anthill at Kgalapitse crop fields

Conclusion

Faced with the challenge of food insecurity in Botswana, this special diploma programme allowed AEPs a much-needed opportunity to acquire relevant knowledge and skills to assist farmers and community members in addressing challenges to food systems. This was done with a particular focus on helping to attain food security. The learning was reciprocal in that the AEPs and BUAN also learned from the farmers and community members. This is adult education in action – adults learning and doing and, most importantly, making a positive contribution to mitigate a pressing socio-economic issue.

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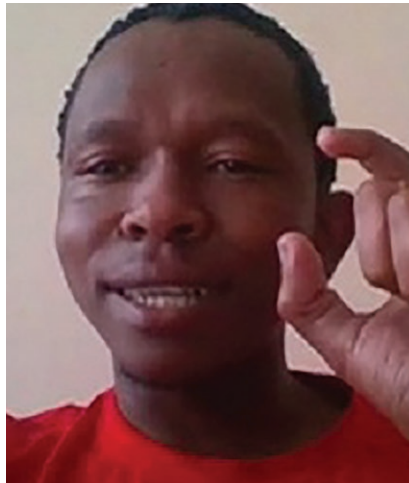
Endnotes

- 1 Moderate or severe food insecurity occurs when a person or household has limited or uncertain access to sufficient and healthy food because of financial limitations or other constraints. As a result of this, people may have to compromise on the quality and quantity of their diets, but they do not necessarily suffer from extreme hunger or starvation (Statistics Botswana, 2023).

THE STRUGGLE FOR A JUST COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEM IN THE EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA



Nohlumelo John is a community farmer in Booyesen Park. She was trained for this as a child by her parents. She uses her produce to feed people who 'default' on their TB medications in Booyesen Park. The main reason they are 'defaulting' is because of hunger.



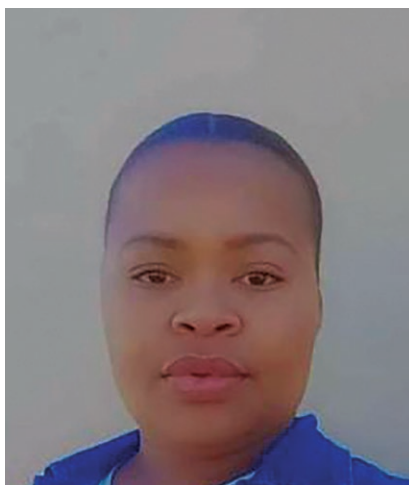
Siyabulela Mama is a member of the Nelson Mandela Bay Water Crisis Committee and Assembly of the Unemployed. He is a researcher at the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET) at Nelson Mandela University and part of the *Amandla!* Magazine's Editorial Collective.



Vuyokazi Made is a backyard farmer, coordinator for *Amandla!* Port Elizabeth Collective and activist at the Assembly of the Unemployed.



Sibusiso Myoli is a traditional healer, finance student and a community farmer in Wells Estate.



Nombulelo Sineke is a community farmer.



Ziphozethu Vani is an agronomist and small-scale farmer.

The group refers to themselves as 'Abamelwane', an isiXhosa word meaning 'neighbours' in English.

Introduction

This article seeks to demonstrate some of the pathways and possibilities for food sovereignty by exploring the case of a community food system in Nelson Mandela Bay, Eastern Cape, South Africa. It examines the convergence of unemployment, poverty and inequality that is causing untold stress and anxiety for so many working-class communities. It looks at how building a community food system can be a liberating alternative for communities who are struggling to survive. Building community food systems is not just a form of resistance against the triad of unemployment, poverty and inequality affecting South African communities – it is also a therapeutic process that can help to empower communities to take action. Finally, we look at how Adult Learning and Education (ALE) that draws on the local and traditional practices of communities is an essential element to include at all stages of the process of developing community food systems.

The World Bank¹ recently released a report indicating that South Africa has the highest unemployment rate in the world. South Africa also has one of the most unequal income distributions in the world as measured by the Gini Coefficient². In the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, located on the shores of Algoa Bay in the Eastern Cape Province, where our work is located, 10 children died as a result of malnutrition and a further 108 were hospitalised between April and September 2022. South Africa's economic crisis has left many working class communities in a precarious situation and this has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The problem of food insecurity was already evident before, but it has become worse in the past few years. Working the land to produce food locally has emerged as one way of combating this. It is a healing process that is not just about building livelihoods, but it is also where we find peace.

Background to the initiative

We are a group of community farmers working in different townships of Nelson Mandela Bay – Kwadwesi Extension, Kwazakhele, Wells Estate,

and Booyesen Park. Some of us were moved from Veeplaas and relocated to Booyesen Park, where the government built our RDP houses³. This is where we began the work of becoming Booyesen Park community farmers. Collectively as farmers we hold a long history of activism, much of it through our partnership working with the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET) at Nelson Mandela University. This is through their community education programme and, more recently, through their community food systems building project, which is linked to their community education work.

In Booyesen Park

When we moved to this area, there was no proper infrastructure and no local shops to buy household groceries. Where there was access to shops, the high price of food, which rose exponentially during the COVID-19 pandemic, meant that buying groceries was not feasible for many people. Faced with this situation, we made the decision to come together and take matters into our own hands. We decided to start growing food in our own backyards and to share the produce amongst ourselves, just as we had grown up doing in our rural communities.

Coming together as community farmers in eBhayi⁴, Eastern Cape

We recently visited fishers in the rural Coffee Bay area of the Eastern Cape. It is heartening to see how, after having spent the day at sea, they share their harvest with their neighbours. The smell of fresh fish cooking emanates from every house. This shows a level of solidarity that is re-emerging in many communities, one that can help build food-secure communities. After the needs of the community have been met, the surplus fish is sold to tourists to generate some extra income. We were greatly inspired by this example.

In Wells Estate in eBhayi many of us, like elsewhere in the country, have



Nohlumelo John watering her backyard garden in Booyesen Park

struggled to find work despite having various skills and knowledge. As a result, we began discussions to see how we could take advantage of locally available resources. We turned our attention to the forest at the back of our houses. We decided to clear 10 hectares in order to start a food garden. We were able to grow enough food for our own consumption, and even produce a surplus that we can sell in the local community. We saw many others from our community using portions of the forest to kraal⁵ their livestock and we were able to use the manure from this for our farming. Many people are also occupying land to build shacks to live in. However, it is municipal land so they may have problems later (see further below). We decided to develop farmers' committees to manage the use of the land in the forest. Many people joined us in this project, and we are now also able to provide guidance to people who are looking for a place to live.

Ways of knowing and learning

Local and traditional knowledge is based on the understandings and skills developed over time by individuals and communities that are specific to where they are located. It is embedded in their livelihoods and is dynamic, changing according to the needs of the community. Thus, we always consult community members when implementing initiatives because they possess invaluable

knowledge about the area that they live in, including, for example, about the traditional use of medicinal plants. As mentioned, this approach is also inspired by our fisher counterparts who harvest fish for their livelihoods.

The skills we as adults have gained growing up in rural areas, as well as those learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, have come from putting those skills to use – learning by doing. It is learning that is embedded in our culture, history, beliefs, attitudes, thought processes, language and worldview⁶. Some of us acquired knowledge of farming from living in our rural homes even before migrating to the city for work. Others started farming for the first time during the desperate COVID-19 times. Thanks to the support of CIPSET in bringing us together through food assemblies as a form of peer-to-peer learning, we have been able to transfer these farming skills from more experienced to less experienced farmers, and even to beginners. Food assemblies are groups where we come together and share our experiences with others. For example, if someone has a problem with pests eating their crops, they can bring this up at the assembly and share it with others in an effort to find a solution. Others may have already experienced the same problem and know how to deal with it. This peer-to-peer learning is another element that helps us to survive and inspires us to work together in solidarity as we struggle to set up community food systems. It has also helped us to better understand the root causes of problems and the politics behind why we continue to struggle.

Stronger together

The solidarity that we have fostered through our work as community farmers expresses itself in various ways. For example, in our work we are faced with an ongoing problem of water scarcity. We have to carry water in buckets from our houses to our gardens. Therefore, apart from the issue of access to land, we have also become keenly aware of the issue of access to water as another essential factor to be tackled when trying to achieve food security and sovereignty. As a result, we have also joined a water sovereignty campaign. Community solidarity has grown and is helping people in other ways. For example,



Sibanye community farmers in Kwazakhele with Saltuba cooperative members – seedbank meeting

people who take medication for TB or other conditions need to eat properly while taking the treatment. They must ensure that they have adequate nutrition to aid in their recovery. What started as an initiative to provide people with food is also helping those with health conditions to cope with their illnesses. A community kitchen has also been started that cooks for patients at our local clinic at least once a week.

In Sibanye Community in Kwazakhele, the farmers look at community farming as something that is inspired by a range of issues. For example, we saw that we were buying everything from supermarkets, even food that we can grow for ourselves. We decided to challenge ourselves to break this dependency by producing our own food. Community farming is also helping to mobilise young people to confront not only the poverty and unemployment that they face, but also drug and alcohol abuse, which are endemic in the Kwazakhele community. We also looked at illegal dumping sites, especially the *gap taps*⁷, and saw that these too are areas that can be transformed into community gardens. We held a number of community meetings promoting this idea which were widely welcomed and supported.

In Kwadwesi Extension, the Amandla Study Group has set up *backyard gardens*. This initiative emerged from the discussions of study groups that were looking at a variety of community issues, principally at the widespread problem of unemployment. We wanted the study groups to carry out some

practical actions to respond to the problems being discussed, and they settled on the farming project as a simple and effective intervention that people could get involved in. As shown above, community gardens do not just help to mitigate food insecurity in communities, they also bring people together in an atmosphere of solidarity where they can mobilise on other topics that interest them, such as genetically modified organisms (GMOs), austerity, unemployment, crime and drug abuse, etc. Our discussions and activities have resulted in us joining the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign as we believe that we will only overcome the problem of food insecurity by striving for food sovereignty in our communities and removing dependence on external food systems.

The importance of language

Reflecting on this work has also challenged us to consider how we use language and how certain words can sometimes undermine the meaning of important humanistic work. We do not refer to the work we do as gardening. This is an English word most often associated with middle class leisure, or often with work performed by working class men whose labour has been marginalised and racialised in our society. The word gardener does not adequately describe what we do. It fails to capture the essence of the socially useful livelihoods work carried out by working class people in urban

and rural communities. The isiXhosa terms *ukulima* (to farm) and *abalimi* (as farmers) are the words used by people involved in community farming when referring to themselves and their work in our communities. These words better value the important work they perform.

A new worldview

We are acutely aware that food security and sovereignty are burning issues in South Africa that are intimately connected to access to land. Although community farmers are reclaiming and regenerating land in schools, clinics and previously neglected public spaces, the amount of land is still very marginal. The problem is made more difficult by the fact that the state usually views available urban land as potential space for housing and not for local food production. This is in stark contrast to the view of communities that sometimes settle informally on land that is earmarked for housing. To better serve communities, land should be set aside for a variety of social purposes, including urban farming. We see an example of this in Silindokuhle Pre-primary School in the Joe Slovo settlement in Cape Town where the Wathint'Abafazi farmers are growing their own food.

Urban planning should take into account the ideas and wishes of communities when deciding on land allocation and planning processes. This would result in greater recognition and possibilities for urban community farming. We recognise that many of us are farming on municipal land that we have occupied, and that the municipality may show up at any time with a development plan for the land. This is why we are currently advocating for 10-year leases for the land we occupy so that we can be more secure, and our situation less precarious. We also understand that our struggle for food sovereignty challenges the hegemony of large-scale industrial agriculture and the political economy of multinational companies in Africa. On the one hand, this industry produces a lot of food for the wider market, but on the other, it is exacerbating the problem of food insecurity that is affecting poor communities across the continent.



Sibusiso Myoli and Mzikazi Nkata planting new seedlings (Wells Estate Community Farm)

Therefore, our struggle is also an act of protest and advocacy against the agro-industrial complex in Africa that focuses on mechanisation and technology to achieve economies of scale that are not sustainable for the environment, nor for the human race.

Conclusion

Our journey has taught us that we each have a duty to work for the development of alternative food systems. We need to mobilise communities so that they are better equipped to organise themselves and to engage in activities to sustain their livelihoods. Education can play a role in helping people understand the links to other important issues such as the right to land, water, energy and a safe environment. Our struggle is also one for better leadership, one that values the rights and needs of all members of society and realises that our environment is a finite resource. On the way, we have drawn on a wealth of local knowledge and experience learned from our communities. We continue to forge links with other food movements around South Africa and the continent because only through solidarity with other African communities can we win the struggle for food sovereignty.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=ZA>
- 2 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264627/ranking-of-the-20-countries-with-the-biggest-inequality-in-income-distribution/#:~:text=Gini%20Index%20%2D%20countries%20with%20the%20biggest%20inequality%20in%20income%20distribution%202021&text=South%20Africa%20had%20the%20highest.a%20Gini%20score%20of%2063>
- 3 RDP houses are government subsidised housing for low-income families (part of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) initiated in 1994).
- 4 eBhayi or iBhayi in isiXhosa means 'the bay'. It is the name used for a group of predominantly Black townships on the outskirts of the city of Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth). It is also used as a name for the city.
- 5 To enclose in an area (kraal).
- 6 See Porta, T.D., & Cafarella R.S. (2010). *Capturing the Voices of Learners from Non-Western and Indigenous Cultures: Links to Learning in Adulthood*.
- 7 Municipal land which is zoned as public open space.

SEED SOVEREIGNTY'S ROLE IN ACHIEVING FOOD SECURITY: LIMPHASA RICE IRRIGATION SCHEME, MALAWI



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Introduction

This article interrogates the role of seed sovereignty in achieving food security. Using the Limphasa Rice Irrigation Scheme as an example, the article looks at factors that influence the use of local seed varieties instead of hybrid seeds that are advocated by the Malawi government through the Ministry of Agriculture. We look at indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and argue that the abandonment of indigenous knowledge of local seed varieties is one of the causes of food insecurity. We argue for adult learning and education (ALE) among smallholder farmers on the topics of ownership, conservation, preservation and storage of local seed varieties. We concur with Phiri (2023) that 'adult education is a core component of life-long learning, which takes place from the cradle to the grave'.

Context

The government of Malawi, as in most African countries, encourages farmers, including those cultivating rice, to adopt high yielding varieties of seed through the Seed Act of 2022. This act does not recognise local seed varieties as approved seed. The dominance of commercial seed companies in Malawi has led to the erosion of farmers' rights to use local seeds. Seed patents and intellectual property rights have restricted the free exchange and saving of seeds, thereby hindering farmers' ability to access and preserve their local seed varieties. There is no protection for farmers' seed systems (and for their associated knowledge systems) leading to neglect and/or demise, or acquisition by commercial systems without benefits for the farmers (Wynberg, van Niekerk, Williams and Mkhaliphi, 2012). Many communities have lost their seed diversity and become dependent on



Source: Unsplash

commercial seeds, which do not always perform well in local environments (Mloza-Banda, Kaudzu and Benesi, 2010). The reliance on commercial seeds has posed challenges to food security due to their limited adaptability and genetic uniformity (Machena and Banda, 2002).

However, within this context, studies (Das and Das, 2014; Irangani and Shiratake, 2013) indicate that there are farmers who follow indigenous farming systems and use particular strategies to select seeds, maintain seed stock and anticipate climate change. One such example is the Lymphasa Rice Irrigation Scheme. It is located in the Mkondezi area of the Traditional Authority Mkumbira in the Nkhata Bay District (Northern Region of Malawi). Some of the findings from a study undertaken there are discussed below.

Findings from the Lymphasa Rice Irrigation Scheme

The research revealed that farmers prefer to plant local rice varieties like Nyanyondo and Langimbiri, introduced by farmers from Chitipa District¹ and distributed through a farmers' network. The reasons for this include that the varieties are aromatic, have a medium grain size, grow well during

both winter and summer and mature early. These factors are not found in the genetically modified seeds provided by agricultural extension workers. The study indicated that being drought-resistant is one of the key factors influencing the adoption of local rice seed varieties. Farmers create plots and use traditional water management techniques to conserve water. When the plots have more water than is required for the growth of the seed, farmers drain it off. They also use indigenous knowledge in their approach to storage and to determine which grains are healthy.

The importance of local seed varieties and IKS

Farmers have been the primary custodians of seed varieties for millennia, preserving and exchanging them through traditional practices. These practices are crucial for maintaining the diversity of local seed varieties. When farmers have control over their seeds, they can use them according to local conditions and share them freely within their communities conserving valuable genetic resources. This farmer-led seed preservation and control not only ensures food security but also empowers communities to be more self-reliant (Wynberg et al., 2012).

As noted by different scholars, there are examples of farmers in countries such as India, Sri Lanka and the Philippines who prefer their own seeds rather than those supplied by private companies. Some farmers create informal networks and visit each other's fields before harvest (Irangani and Shiratake, 2013; Nicolas and Cabarogias 2015). They judge the quality of the seeds by observation. If they are satisfied, they can enter into an agreement to exchange seeds with each other (Singh, 2007).

In addition to the importance of local seeds to food security and agriculture (e.g. fodder quality and yield), the right to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed is an extremely important economic issue for the welfare and livelihood of small-scale farmers (Pungulani, Kadyampakeni, Nsapato and Kachapila, 2012). Being able to save money is an important benefit for farmers who can then use any money saved to improve their livelihoods as opposed to spending it on commercial seeds.

The use of local seeds also provides a strong social and cultural bond among farmers and between communities. By sharing and exchanging seeds, farmers have been able to define and strengthen kinship, friendship and solidarity. Farmers' seed systems are an integral part of local traditions and culture, and are embedded in farmers' identity and customs.

Towards a cooperative model for seed sovereignty: The role of ALE

Achieving food security is a complex challenge that demands innovative approaches and collaborative efforts. Empowering farmers with control over local seed varieties through ALE is a potent strategy to enhance food security, agricultural resilience and community self-reliance. The Limphasa Rice Irrigation Scheme study suggests the need to draw on IKS methodologies to better understand the broader political position regarding the use of local seed varieties versus corporate invasion, and also in finding ways to protect and support rice farmers. Adult education has a vital role to play in this. In regard to training, a model of seed preservation through cooperatives, that aim to protect local seed varieties while strengthening food security within communities, could be devised. This model would involve the formation of cooperatives where members share experiences about seed preservation, storage, sustainable farming practices and the value of IKS. These cooperatives would serve as hubs for activities such as seed collection, storage, sharing and advocacy, with the overall aim of fostering a sustainable approach to seed sovereignty and agricultural resilience. Adult education has a central role to play within such a cooperative model – some examples being the organising of workshops, field visits, interactive sessions and seed-sharing events to actively engage community members.

ALE provides an opportunity for different stakeholders such as policy makers, agricultural practitioners and academia to learn from indigenous farming techniques, including the choice of local seeds by smallholder farmers. Smallholder farmers can also learn from others in a reciprocal relationship. This is in line with Sustainable Development Goal 2, which argues that '[t]raditional knowledge related to the preservation of existing genetic resources, including the genetic diversity of seeds, should be recognized and maintained, and the fair sharing of the relevant benefits should be promoted' (United Cities and Local Governments, 2018).

Conclusion

By valuing and preserving IKS and its practices, we can build a sustainable agricultural system to nourish the present and future generations of Malawi. Encouraging farmers through adult education programmes, workshops and training about the importance of retaining indigenous knowledge of seed ownership, conservation, preservation and storage of local seed varieties will help achieve seed sovereignty and, ultimately, food security.

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Endnotes

- 1 Chitipa is a district in the North of Malawi bordering Tanzania and Zambia.

HOW REFUGEES IN UGANDA ARE RE-BUILDING LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SYSTEMS



South Sudanese who have fled the fighting in Sudan find what shelter they can at a transit centre in the town of Renk, next to the border crossing point (source: Jok Solomun/Reuters, *The New Humanitarian*)

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Introduction

This article looks at the links between forced displacement¹ – which occurs as a result of human rights violations, insecurity, conflict, climate change, among others – and food insecurity. It looks at how refugees (with a particular focus on adult learners in Common Interest Groups (CIGs) in the Kyaka II refugee settlement²) are reconstructing their food systems³, fighting hunger and preserving their food culture through adult learning and extension education support.

Context

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) Global Trends Report (2022) indicates that by the end of 2022, 108.4 million people worldwide had been forcibly displaced, almost 90% of them in low- and middle-income countries.

Low- and middle-income countries also play host to 76% of the world's refugees and other people in need of international protection. Despite

Uganda being one of the poorest and most food insecure countries in the world, and in a context of diminishing humanitarian aid and an increasing refugee population, it is the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, with over a million refugees, most of whom are from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burundi and Somalia⁴.

Forced displacement is not a passing event – it often becomes a protracted displacement and can be devastating. People are forcefully uprooted from their lives and relocated to places and spaces, such as overcrowded settlements and camps, with limited or no opportunities to live a dignified life. Refugees face deprivation of life's essentials, in particular shelter and food, including the right to produce their own food. They experience marginalisation and extended suffering of 'indignities and material hardship' (Crawford, Cosgrave, Haysom and Walicki, 2015).

Some countries, like Uganda, have a 'progressive and favourable refugee policy'⁵ (Food Security Dashboard Quarter 2, 2023). However, even with

this focus on self-resilience, there are limited livelihood opportunities for refugees. As a result there are 'socio-economic vulnerabilities, protection risks, and limited access to basic essential services such as food, education, and healthcare' (ibid.).

Land access is seen as a significant determinant of food security and, therefore, access to agricultural land is available to refugees but on a limited scale. The rural host population in the same settlements have slightly more land for agriculture, compared to refugee households. Over the years there has been a reduction in soil fertility, increasing water scarcity and unpredictable weather, characterised by flooding in the rainy season and prolonged dry spells, all of which impact negatively on crop production. The COVID-19 pandemic compounded the food insecurity situation for many, especially for refugee households.

The role of food

Scholars, such as Awidi and Quan-Baffour (2020), note that similarities in terms of ethnicity, culture, language, religion, history, food, 'among other malleable identity constructs' (Ho, 2017) result in refugees feeling more 'at home' and foster a sense of oneness. These 'affinity ties'⁶ (ibid.) or connections play a role in helping refugees to integrate socially and economically with fewer difficulties.

'Food is intrinsically linked to culture, identity, and for people with lived refugee experiences, cultural foods are a critical part of settlement into a new country, which is often a time of high stress and dislocation from friends and family' (Gingell, Murray, Correa-Velez and Gallegos, 2022). It is not uncommon to see Congolese refugees, for example, swap the World Food Programme (WFP)' 5-litre jerrycan of processed oil for the Congo-based orange palm oil, a preferred oil for cooking.

Traditional food often gives displaced people a sense of 'hope and solace' and serves 'as a source of normalcy and stability' (Foodtank, 2016).

90% of refugees in the Kyaka II settlement depend on agriculture for food. Unfortunately land size and soil productivity is reducing every year.



Refugees in a local food market in a settlement in Uganda (source: UNHCR portal)



Preferred orange cooking oil



WFP distributed cooking oil

Therefore, refugees have adapted by producing food in backyard gardens. Agriculture extension education supports participants⁸ to use the small plots maximally (Awidi and Quan-Baffour, 2020). 'Caphas'⁹, a CIG participant, describes some of the practices they use to increase the chances of food production in these backyard plots and also explains how refugees often sell part of their produce to meet other needs:

[We use] bottle irrigation technology, organic pesticides, and compost manure [...].

[...] We rear and sell goats from which we buy land in instalments; we make compost manure for our garden from goat droppings [...].

The role of adult education

In Uganda, refugees are able to participate in adult learning programmes and these programmes, plus the lived experience of being a displaced person, often involve a process of personal transformation, involving the disruption of 'old

patterns of meaning and constructing new ways of seeing the self and the world' (Dirkx, 1998). As refugees adapt to their new life, with all its challenges and hardships, they draw from their existing knowledge and skills and also learn – through adult education and extension programmes – new knowledge and skills (for example, to do with agriculture, business, financial literacy, etc.). Refugees might also undergo shifts in attitude as they deal with their experience of displacement.

Socio-cultural and economic collectives and networks are very important in helping refugees cope with their new lives. Community support and solidarity extends beyond the practical to include emotional and psychological well-being. 'Social capital in the form of horizontal connections' (Cottyn, 2016) becomes a vital part of a displaced person's resilience and strength in adapting to a new way of life. For example, groups might pool financial resources to meet their subsistence needs, and/or engage in agriculture practices built around learning cohorts (Awidi and Quan-Baffour, 2020).

Conclusion

Forced and protracted displacement causes major disruption in people's lives, including to their food systems. As seen in the example of the Kyaka II refugee settlement, refugees exhibit strength and resilience in the face of many challenges and struggles. They participate in livelihood adaptation in new and unfamiliar contexts and also in the preservation of their food systems. Ultimately, these impact positively on food security. Adult education has a significant part to play in achieving this.



A backyard vegetable garden in Kyaka II

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- 3 The food system is a complex web of activities involving production, processing, transport and consumption. Issues concerning the food system include the governance and economics of food production, its sustainability, the degree to which we waste food, how food production affects the natural environment and the impact of food on individual and population health (Oxford Martin Programme on the Future of Food c/o Oxford Martin School, University of Oxford).
- 4 Uganda hosts 1,599,188 refugees (Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, Government of Uganda, 29 February 2024).
- 5 Refugees in Uganda generally enjoy freedom of movement within the country, access to work opportunities, education and basic services.
- 6 Interlocking constellations form webs of connections that transverse essentialising categories of social difference and contribute to shared biographies that allow for cultivating emotional attachments to a place and its people (Ho, 2017).
- 7 The World Food Programme is an international organisation within the United Nations that provides food assistance worldwide.
- 8 The case study of the Kyaka II refugee settlement was carried out among adult learners in Common Interest Groups (CIGs) engaged in various community development programmes.
- 9 Not their real name.

Endnotes

- 1 The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) defines 'forced displacement' as: displaced "as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence or human rights violations".
- 2 The Kyaka II settlement exhibits the same physical difficulties as most camps; it is located in rural remote communities in Southwestern Uganda, with very limited access to social services (Awidi, 2020). A study on refugee livelihoods was conducted there in 2019/20.

WOMEN'S LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY IN ALGERIA



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Introduction

This article argues that *local* and *indigenous knowledge* and *intergenerational learning* are important and necessary components for Adult Learning and Education (ALE) to support and strengthen women's income-generating activities and to promote food security. In addition, the article highlights the need to take inspiration from the agricultural models of our ancestors in order to be part of the broader organic campaign for healthier food, while protecting the environment. The article focuses on the Rural Women's Association in Algeria (AFUD), which argues for the establishment of educational farms where ALE principles are embedded to preserve the environment, adopt water-saving practices and raise awareness about current issues, in addition to more practical skills that are needed such as reading and writing, production processes and financial expertise.

AFUD

AFUD represents a collective comprised primarily of women and some men from diverse backgrounds, educational levels and linguistic diversity. Members come from development NGOs, women's associations, socio-cultural groups and village committees. Additionally, there are women from official bodies

advocating for women's rights and positions, as well as individuals from universities and development cooperation agencies.

The Association's goal is to empower rural women through the creation of income-generating activities, especially in crafts and agriculture. This is to enhance their capabilities and become active contributors to the economic development of the Bejaia province in particular, and the country in general. AFUD strives to encourage the exchange of ideas, experiences and knowledge through training programmes, aiming to elevate the education and professional levels of women and to meet the needs of rural women across all domains, with a special emphasis on promoting female entrepreneurship.

Its vision is to develop local agricultural and artisanal products, appreciating and recognising the majority of the producers – women. AFUD's approach is three-tiered:

1. Guidance and support: Rural women possess invaluable ancestral knowledge and skills that are often unrecognised. The association aims to raise awareness, guide and advise women so that they can undertake income-generating activities.
2. Cooperative creation: The association strives to support projects that facilitate women's entry into the workforce by

promoting the creation and growth of cooperatives.

3. Knowledge exchange: Activities are developed to encourage the exchange of best practices related to education, employment, the establishment of associative projects and networking among stakeholders.

Background

In Algeria, women are known to be at the forefront of bringing communities together to promote our cultural heritage and local products. They do this through mutual cooperation and resource sharing. More and more, women and the local economy suffer from the rise of cheaper mass-produced products and luxury items, which are available throughout the Maghreb¹, where there has been a vast expansion of shops, markets and online shopping – all dedicated to the commercialisation of products. People are bombarded with a flood of different choices, outlets and even home delivery. These mass produced products come with an overuse of chemicals, plastic and throw-away by-products, making it difficult to keep our environment in balance. These kinds of products, including the way they are made, some marketed as 'organic' or 'natural' (and they might not be) causes confusion for the local populace. The food items and how they are produced stand in stark contrast to the agricultural model of our ancestors, who practised agriculture that respected biological diversity while producing healthy organic food by utilising sustainable agricultural practices.

It is imperative to support students, farmers, entrepreneurs and initiatives such as women's cooperatives in ways that encourage them to embark on agricultural activities, whether agroecological and/or educational – this in an effort to keep our authentic, locally-produced products 'current' and guard against them becoming a thing of the past. The creation of local markets for products from healthy and sustainable agriculture is an imperative. ALE's role in projects that pursue solidarity and that strengthen socio-economic conditions in rural communities is essential.

Organic farming and ALE

Globally, there has been an increase in organic farming, which is not new to our region, and this represents a valuable opportunity for us to be a part of this movement. Our region abounds in traditional knowledge and expertise which must be preserved and developed. ALE has an important role to play in this by integrating concepts such as local and indigenous knowledge and intergenerational learning. It can play a role in encouraging a commitment to a more sustainable and diversified agriculture, raising awareness of the preservation of the environment and the challenges of organic farming. It can prepare young entrepreneurs to seize opportunities offered by this sector (and thus promote economic growth) and it can help to enlighten consumers on the distinction between organic, local and natural products, among others.

The establishment of educational farms plays a crucial role in this endeavour, and should definitely involve rural women. These farms can offer training in various fields, such as the production of cheese, soap, jams made from aromatic and medicinal plants, as well as in the management of small farms. The objective is to sensitise women to the importance of preserving the environment in the face of the challenges posed by climate change, for example adopting water-saving practices like drip irrigation systems and using renewable energies.

Cooperatives

Currently, rural women play a central role in development while preserving biodiversity and in the quest for self-sufficiency, particularly through family-based initiatives. There are also a large number of women holders of agricultural and artisanal cards², as well as programmes such as the Environmental Governance and Biodiversity project (GENBI), which encourages the participation of women in the production and marketing of organic products in parts of the country.

The creation of women's cooperatives further strengthens the role of rural women by harnessing biological resources and traditional expertise. To

ensure the success of these initiatives, close work with rural women is essential as they face various social and economic barriers, including limited access to information, a lack of reading and writing proficiency, a lack of training and difficulties in accessing employment opportunities, activities and financing. Despite these challenges, the first exclusively female cooperatives in Algeria have succeeded in demonstrating their effectiveness, particularly within the El Kala National Park³, where women produce and market vegetable oils from lentils, beekeeping products, perfumes and herbal medicines, as well as prickly pear products. These cooperatives make it possible to ensure fair remuneration for producers thanks to fair trade, guaranteeing a minimum price and decent working conditions. In addition, they promote resilience to the impacts of climate change, such as droughts and floods.

Future plans

Recommendations to strengthen ALE programmes, with particular emphasis on the concepts of *local* and *indigenous knowledge* and *intergenerational learning* could take the form of the following actions:

- Raise awareness within communities: Organise workshops and information sessions at the local level to sensitise community members on the distinction between organic, local and natural products, highlighting the benefits of each category.
- Promote intergenerational learning: Encourage the exchange of knowledge between generations, allowing elders to pass on their traditional knowledge of agriculture and food production to younger generations, thus promoting the preservation of indigenous knowledge.
- Integrate local knowledge into training: Adapt agricultural training programmes to include region-specific local knowledge, emphasising sustainable agricultural practices and local production methods.
- Support access to education: Facilitate access to ALE by making these programmes financially and

geographically accessible, so that more people can benefit from these opportunities.

- Promote organic farming: Set up specific organic farming training programmes to encourage the transition to more sustainable and environmentally friendly production methods.

By adopting these recommendations, we can contribute to a better understanding of food production and to the promotion of organic and sustainable agriculture, while preserving local and indigenous knowledge, thus promoting more balanced economic growth and environmental protection.

Conclusion

AFUD works actively to promote education and training for rural women, while developing cooperatives to strengthen their livelihoods and contribute to fair remuneration for producers. By combining these initiatives with a transition to more sustainable agriculture, Algeria can achieve its development goals while preserving its precious environment.

Endnotes

- 1 The region comprises western and central North Africa including Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. The Maghreb also includes the disputed territory of Western Sahara (Wikipedia).
- 2 An agricultural and craft card is an official document issued by the relevant authorities, confirming a person's professional status as an artisan or farmer. This card is crucial as it enables the authorities to keep track of and support artisanal and agricultural activities, while also granting artisans and farmers specific benefits and rights associated with their profession.
- 3 It is home to an extremely unique ecosystem, and since its establishment in 1983, nature conservationists have been working tirelessly to ensure the survival of the fauna and flora of the park. UNESCO recognised the El Kala National Park as a biosphere reserve in 1990 <https://www.algeria.com/attractions/national-parks/el-kala-national-park/>



PROFILING FOOD SOVEREIGNTY ORGANISATIONS IN AFRICA

In keeping with the theme of food systems, following we share brief profiles of organisations from different parts of Africa. There are many more organisations and groupings working in this area.

CENTRAL AFRICA

BETTER WORLD CAMEROON (BWC)



Based on indigenous knowledge, BWC is a non-profit dedicated to developing sustainable agricultural strategies at the local level in order to alleviate the food crisis and extreme poverty. BWC promotes food sovereignty and landscape regeneration through permaculture and ecovillage design practices. Its work is about rebuilding the economy and transitioning to a better world through permaculture, community living and the use of African wisdom and local values. BWC

is creating a social movement that will help end youth unemployment, empower women and improve sustainable development in Africa.

In 2012 in the region of Bafut, Ndanifor Permaculture Eco Village was born. It was BWC's first demonstration site, a place where the principles for a sustainable culture could be implemented and made visible to all. It is part of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN).

CONTACT

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<https://betterworld-cameroon.com/>



Illustration by Carmen Garcia Gordillo for Climate Illustrated

EAST AFRICA

KENYAN PEASANTS LEAGUE (KPL)



ORGANIZE! AMPLIFY! RESIST!

Founded in 2016, the Kenyan Peasants League is a social movement of Kenyan farmers and consumers who advocate for agrarian reforms and agroecology as a means to ensure food sovereignty and environmental conservation. KPL focuses on indigenous seed banks, livestock and plant varieties in support of its belief in an alternative economy. KPL is driven by a desire to ensure sustainable livelihoods for farmers, fisherfolk and pastoralists. Members

are organised in clusters so that they can jointly produce and market their produce. KPL argues against practices that commodify food production. KPL has a clear feminist articulation, which includes a peasants' feminism programme that focuses on women's land rights and access to land.

CONTACT

kenyanpeasantsleague@gmail.com



Agrarian Reform for Food Sovereignty Campaign

KLP participants at the LPM UNDROP and Climate Justice Workshop, Polokwane, South Africa, May 2024

(LMP: Landless People's Movement; UNDROP: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas)

NORTH AFRICA



OBSERVATORY OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND THE ENVIRONMENT (OSAE)



OSAE is a Tunisian non-profit associative structure independent of all political, religious, private or governmental structures.

The general objectives of OSAE are to:

- Carry out academic research on various issues related to the OSAE's areas of activity, including food sovereignty, agricultural and food policies, food, malnutrition and undernutrition, environment, rurality, biodiversity, environmental and social justice;
- Produce and disseminate knowledge on various agricultural, food, rural and environmental issues for citizens, civil society, young people, students, researchers and decision-makers;
- Promote awareness of the importance of agricultural, food, environmental and social issues which constitute the central elements of food sovereignty,

sustainable development, social justice and the essential protection of the environment and natural resources and biodiversity;

- Help train younger generations on different themes and issues related to food sovereignty and environmental protection;
- Lead debates and citizen exchanges on all of these issues and actively participate in those organised by public authorities and by civil society as a whole;
- Support social movements that are part of the defence of human rights to food, environmental and agricultural resources.

CONTACT

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<https://osae-marsad.org/>

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY IN TUNISIA

for a food and ecological policy based on peasant agriculture



OSAE

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICAN FOOD SOVEREIGNTY CAMPAIGN (SAFSC)



The SAFSC emerged out of a need to unite organisations, social movements, small scale farmers, farmworkers and NGOs championing food sovereignty into a national platform in advancing food sovereignty strategically in South Africa. This led to the Food Sovereignty Campaign Assembly that took place in late February 2015.

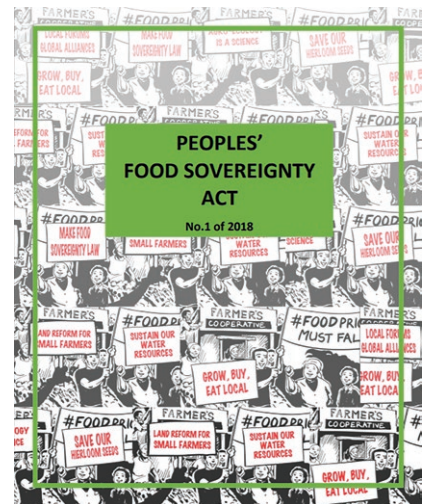
The objectives of the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign are to:

- Tackle the systemic roots of hunger
- Advance food sovereignty alternatives from below to end hunger and sustain life
- Provide a united platform for all sectors, movements, communities and organisations championing food sovereignty
- Build a food sovereignty alliance led by the hungry, small scale farmers, the landless and workers.

CONTACT

info@safsc.org.za

<https://www.safsc.org.za>



SAFSC



Climate Justice Charter Movement

[\(https://www.safsc.org.za/climate-justice-charter/\)](https://www.safsc.org.za/climate-justice-charter/)

WEST AFRICA

TERRE VERTE



The NGO Terre Verte or Green Earth has been working in Burkina Faso since 1989. Terre Verte focuses on family and community rural development based on soil restoration, the development of a *bocage* specific to the Sahel and the establishment of sustainable agriculture. The Pilot Farm of Guiè has succeeded in integrating environmental protection into Sahelian agriculture. The concept, also taken up by other Burkinabè inter-village associations, is based on the creation of bocage perimeters in co-ownership, comprising individual plots and commons whose management is organised around a land grouping of

beneficiaries. The result is a completely restored environment with no soil erosion and no overgrazing, where trees and shrubs are harmoniously integrated into the environment.

A bocage is defined as a rural landscape of meadows and/or fields surrounded by hedges and woods. It is a balanced environment created by humans where trees, crops and livestock are combined and where humans and nature live in harmony. In the Sahel, the primary purpose of a bocage is to keep rainwater where it falls by building bunds, ponds and hedges to mitigate the erosive action of monsoon waters and to maintain the biodiversity of an extremely fragile environment.

https://avaclim.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Bocage_Factsheet_FR.pdf

Since 1990, the Guiè Pilot Farm has informally welcomed many young people into its activities (nursery, livestock, sustainable agriculture, development and maintenance of rural areas, workshop). In January 2008, this was formalised by the creation of the Centre de Formation des Aménageurs Ruraux (CFAR/Training Centre for Rural Developers). The training includes theoretical and practical training in Sahelian bocage techniques.

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<https://eauterreverdure.org>



WEGOUBRI, the Sahelian bocage (Henri Girard)

THROUGHOUT AFRICA

GRAIN



GRAIN is an international non-profit organisation that works to support small farmers and social movements in their struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems. Its support takes the form of

independent research and analysis, networking at local, regional and international levels and fostering new forms of cooperation and alliance-building. Most of GRAIN's work is oriented towards, and carried out in, Africa, Asia and Latin America.

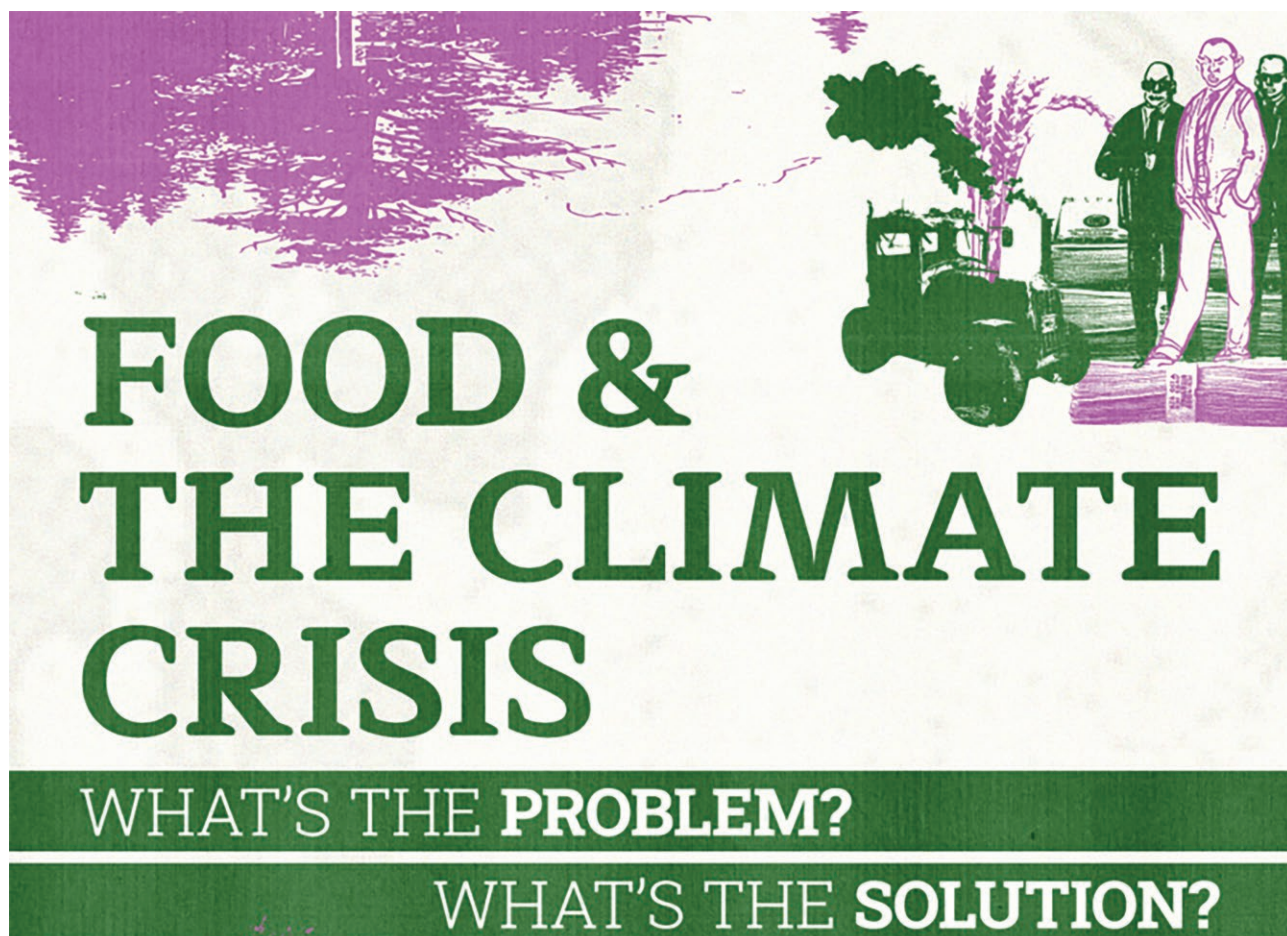
The climate crisis and the food crisis are intimately linked, with the industrial food system – from farm to supermarket – largely responsible for both. Under this programme area, GRAIN draws attention to the

responsibility of industrial agriculture and centralised supply chains in causing the climate crisis, and how food sovereignty and peasant-led agroecology offer a tremendous potential to solve a good part of it.

CONTACT

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<https://grain.org>



GRAIN

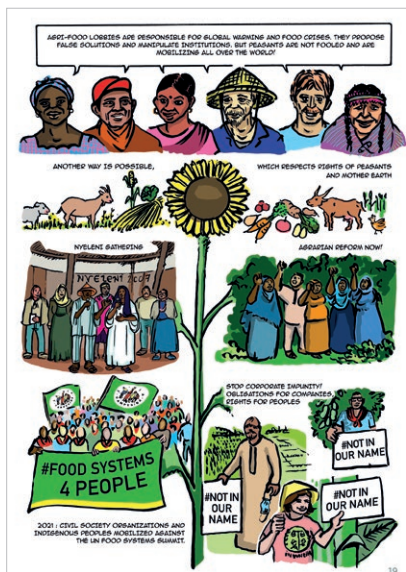
RESOURCES AND MATERIALS



MOJA is a space for sharing educational resources and materials. These materials and resources are predominantly open source and support our practices in diverse contexts. MOJA encourages adult education practitioners across the continent to add to the growing repository on the platform.

Globally, there are an increasing number of publications to do with food sovereignty. ALE has a vital role to play in this. Following are three such examples:

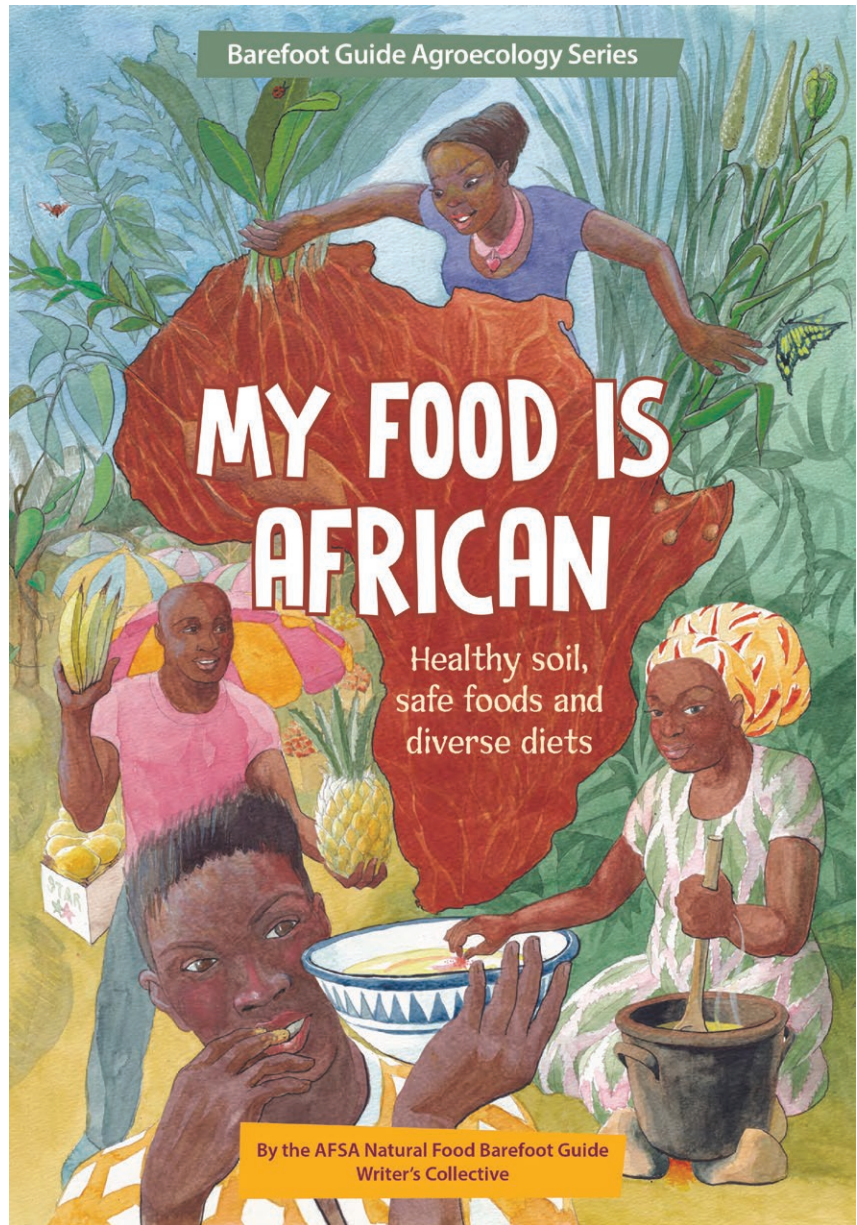
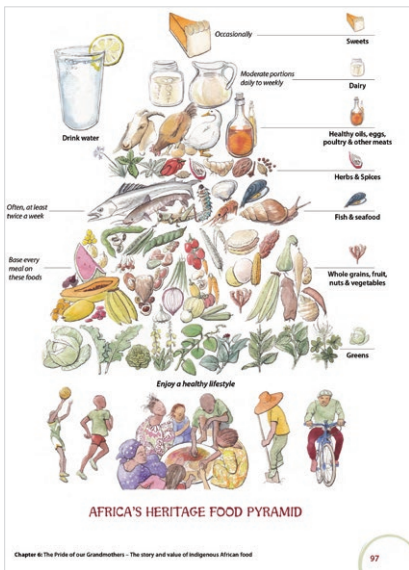
We Feed the World! (2022) is produced by La Via Campesina with artist and activist, Annelise Verdier. This publication advocates for a food system of cooperation which has the interest of people and the planet at its core. It highlights the brave resistance of peasants, workers and indigenous peoples, while denouncing the industrial food system, the exploitation of cheap labour and cut-throat competition for profits.



<https://viacampesina.org/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/11/LVC-We-Feed-the-World-A5-EN-compressed.pdf>

My Food is African (2022) created by AFSA* Natural Food Barefoot Guide Writer's Collective. The publication takes the reader on a journey through Africa's farms, gardens, local markets and kitchens to learn about unique, delicious, healthy foods and cultures. The book supports and confirms what many of our grandmothers, and their grandmothers, have always known about eating healthily.

*Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa



https://www.barefootguide.org/uploads/1/1/1/6/111664/bfg-my_food_is_african_-_lores.pdf

Creative Commons: Attribution – Non Commercial - ShareAlike 4.0 International

Food for Thought and Action: A Food Sovereignty Curriculum (2009) was co-developed by Grassroots International and the National Family Farm Coalition. The publication – a curriculum in four modules – is a practical guide showing how food sovereignty and locally based food systems rooted in social justice and environmental sustainability can be practical alternatives to unsustainable industrial agriculture.

How to Use this Curriculum, continued

Sample Two-Hour Workshop Schedule

Names and introductions	5 min
Introductory Exercise: Defining Food Sovereignty	15 min
Reflection Exercise: Hidden Price Tags in Our Food System	45 min
Action Exercise: Designing Fair and Healthy Value Chains	30 min
Breaktime: What Can I/We Do?	10 min
Wrap-up and Evaluation	15 min

The table below summarizes the purpose of each exercise:

Activity	Purpose
Introductory Exercises	
Discovering Our Common Ground	Discover shared concerns regarding people moving and introducing themselves to each other.
Where Does Our Food Come From?	Discover the great distances our food travels, as well as local food alternatives.
Defining Food Sovereignty	Understand the concept of food sovereignty.
Envisioning Food Sovereignty: What Are We Fighting For?	Explore what food sovereignty would look like in our communities, sense that change is possible.
What Can I/We Do to Strengthen the Food Sovereignty Movement?	Commit and commit to concrete individual and group actions to manifest our food system.
Module I/Consumers	
Reflection Exercise: The Hidden Price Tags in Our Food System (or, "Simply Can't Eat Another Extraneous!")	Understand the inter-connected parts of the food system and learn where food dollars go.
Action Exercise: Designing Fair and Healthy Value Chains	Envision a food system that reflects your values.
Module II/Faith and Anti-hunger Groups	
Reflection Exercise: Designing a Food Aid Program in Accordance with Our Values, Faiths and Beliefs	Understand how U.S. agriculture and trade policies affect hunger and food security around the world, and how to build alternative food aid programs.
Action Exercise: How Do We Align Our Food Aid Programs with Food Sovereignty Principles?	Evaluate how close your community, organization or organization is to meeting the principles of food sovereignty in their food aid and food policy work.
Module III/Environmentalists	
Reflection Exercise: Building a Green Food System	Understand the impacts of U.S. agricultural and trade policy on the environment and create a green food system.
Action Exercise: Food Sovereignty Theory for a Stable Climate	Advocate for international food and agriculture agreements that will reduce climate change.
Module IV/Small Farmers and Farmworkers	
Reflection Exercise: How Did We Get Here? Understanding the Policies That Created Industrial Agriculture – and How We Can Change Them	Understand how policies, people and events have shaped rural communities in the United States and the Global South; discover links with communities in the South.
Action Exercise: Mapping the Political Landscape	Begin to imagine transforming the food system by identifying allies and obstacles for the food sovereignty movement.
Wrap-up	
What I/We Can Do	Commit to taking action.
Evaluation Form	Improve exercises for future sessions.



Grassroots INTERNATIONAL
www.GrassrootsOnline.org

Overview | page 5





Introductory Exercises



Grassroots INTERNATIONAL
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Food for Thought and Action: A Food Sovereignty Curriculum

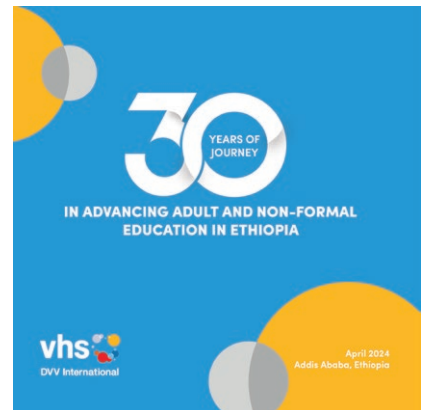
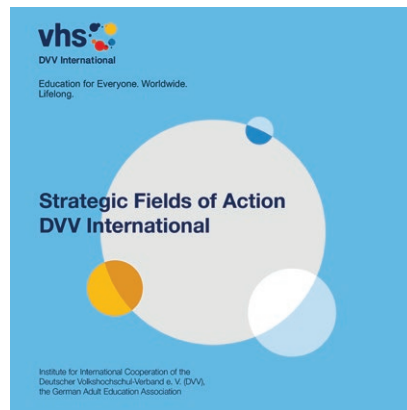
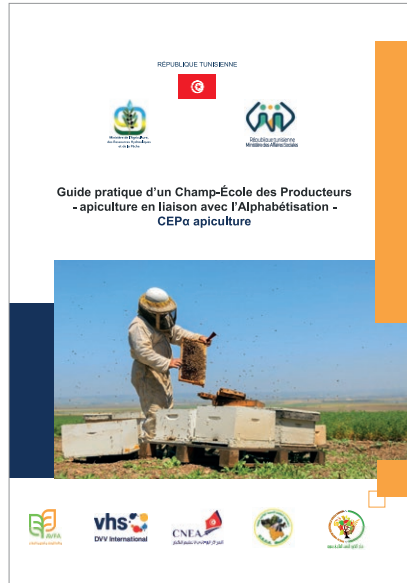
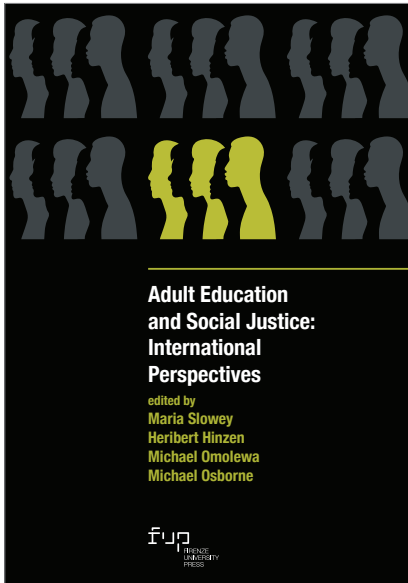
<https://grassrootsonline.org/sites/default/files/Food-for-Thought-and-Action-Overview.pdf>

www.foodforthoughtandaction.org

RECENT PUBLICATIONS



Here are some examples of recent publications which can be accessed on the MOJA platform. Please visit our resource section at www.mojaafrica.net/en/resources



EVENTS



We publish events related to adult learning and education on a regular basis. Please find a list of upcoming and past events [here](#)

We encourage the MOJA community to use the platform to upload their events.

RESOURCES

We continue to update the resource section of MOJA. All the resources can be downloaded for use by our community. Please visit [MOJA](#) to see the variety of resources available.

ORGANISATIONS

Please visit [MOJA](#) to see these organisations. Follow this [link](#) to list your organisation on the MOJA platform.

NEWSLETTER

MOJA circulates a monthly newsletter with information on ALE from around Africa, organisations, events, resources and more. To receive our newsletter please sign up [here](#).

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY

MOJA invites the adult education community to help build the platform. Please join us and [register](#) as a member.

MOJA – your platform for sharing insights, resources and experiences, and building connections to enhance adult education for transformation in Africa.



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