

Solidarity Economy News

Building Human Solidarity to Sustain Life

Newsletter No. 1 2012

contents



COSATU National Strike Against E-tolls and Labour Brokers

“The union movement all over the world is feeling the squeeze from three decades of neoliberal restructuring and now the global crisis. High levels of structural unemployment, fragmented labour markets and austerity measures have all conspired to place labour in a difficult place.

At the same time, unions are struggling to maintain union densities, maintain a capacity for strategic intervention, limiting the practice of worker control and not building broader solidarity in society”.

Vishwas Satgar
(Chairperson, COPAC)

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Editorial

A Call to Labour: Abandon BEE Unionism and Support the Solidarity Economy!

By Vishwas Satgar (Chairperson, COPAC)

In South Africa trade unions, including COSATU, have to confront many of these challenges. However, in South Africa there are three other challenges that face workers unionised into COSATU ranks. First, the ANC government, which COSATU has an alliance with, is managing a globalised economy in the interests of capital. Minor concessions are made to COSATU but in general the overall developmental path is anti-worker. The ANC government's strategy of transforming global institutions like the IMF, World Bank and G20 has not worked but instead it has been coopted. All the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) countries face the same fate. In general South Africa is one of the poster nations from the global south managing its macro-economy to enable a recovery for transnational capital's low wage and jobless growth agenda.

Second, the ANC government has ensured Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) dominates post-apartheid transformation. This has merely amounted to enrichment for a few. Unions have been caught up in the tides of BEE Unionism. This has entailed the following: establishing union investment companies that are tied into dubious BEE deals (the e-toll saga has pointed this out with regard to COSATU's investment company, the loss of workers pension fund money through a SACTWU BEE deal is also very revealing, the relationship between unions and liquidators), using union membership as the basis to make money through medical aids, insurance, pensions etc., and finally using union procurement (t-shirts, stationary, cars, photocopiers etc) to also promote BEE-union leadership enrichment. In short, BEE Unionism has compromised unions (mainly through enriching a few at the top), undermined worker control and limited the extent to which unions advance transformative alternatives from below.

Third, the ANC government has increasingly become undemocratic. It is undermining media freedom, limiting information disclosure through the proposed information bill, passing a new Intelligence Act which gives serious invasive powers to the intelligence agencies, undermining the judicial services commission and appointing cronies to the courts, staffing the highest echelons of the police force with Zuma cronies and undermining chapter 9 institutions like the Human Rights Commission and the office of the Public Protector. In general, the ANC government's response to service delivery protests is

about the iron fist. The murder of Andries Tatane proves this. Labour as a democratising force historically cannot defend this. It cannot go along with this because it will lose its credibility.

These are complex challenges and there is a lot at stake for Labour. However, there is another way out for Labour and workers. In particular, that is to embrace a transformative strategy from below: the solidarity economy and movement. This would entail abandoning BEE Unionism, learning from international experiences (like the union CUT in Brazil and the relationship between unions and cooperatives in Italy), drawing on experiences of worker linked cooperatives in South Africa (the Mine-line workers factory occupation, for example) and embracing an agenda to support the solidarity economy and movement.

Such an agenda to support the Solidarity Economy and movement will entail some of the following: (1) build internal union capacity for trade union linked cooperatives through worker take overs; (2) call for a national Worker Cooperative Act and support Program in the Department of Labour; (3) support the climate jobs campaign and food sovereignty campaign (4) Link the struggle for socially owned renewable energy to promoting worker cooperatives (5) Support the building of community solidarity economy funds (6) Educate and train labour activists, shop stewards and workers about the solidarity economy.

It is only through building a political economy that advances the interests of workers and the poor from below that a new way forward can be found to overcome the impasse and tragic place that South Africa's democracy has arrived at. Labour needs to redefine its role and place now, before it is too late.

International News

UN Declares 2012: “The International Year of Cooperatives”

By Vishwas Satgar (Chairperson, COPAC)



International Year of COOPERATIVES 2012

The United Nations (UN) has declared 2012 the 'International Year of Cooperatives' (IYC). The organising theme for the UN is 'Cooperative Enterprises Build A Better World'. With this focus the UN aims to achieve greater awareness, promote growth of cooperatives and ensure governments establish appropriate policies to support cooperatives.

This affirmation of cooperatives within the mainstream of international development is extremely important and brings the hidden story of over 150 years of modern cooperative experience and practice into full view for the world. Generally, international development is understood as driven by competition, individualism and markets. This is the story we are fed all the time within this market civilisation. However, the cooperative story is the untold story of organising social life through cooperation; cooperatives have played a crucial role in organising production, consumption and living in all the major countries at the heart of capitalism. Post-colonial countries have also utilised cooperatives for development.

In both the global south and north, cooperatives in many instances lost their social character and increasingly began behaving like typical capitalist businesses or became extensions of the state during the 20th century. Part of the revival of interest and support for cooperatives over the past three decades is informed by the need to affirm the unique social character of cooperatives. Cooperatives are values, principles and member based institutions. They are voluntary associative forms, driven by members to meet member social, economic and cultural needs. Cooperatives operating by themselves as islands face many challenges, hence in South Africa and other parts of the world it is important to locate genuine member driven cooperatives within the solidarity economy and movement.

With the global crisis of capitalism the importance of the cooperative alternative is also being affirmed. While cooperatives have also taken a knock they have generally proven to be more resilient than capitalist businesses. Most studies and research show that local embedded cooperative banks, consumer cooperatives and worker cooperatives have generally been able to navigate through the changing circumstances of the global crisis. The democratic member decision-making and collective ownership are crucial in these experiences.

South Africa's apartheid experience of cooperatives have merely produced cooperative businesses, most of which have converted into companies. These are not institutions grounded in values and principles and not based on member driven decision-making, let alone building a cooperative economy. Post-apartheid cooperatives are driven by the state in the name of Black Empowerment (BEE), to achieve the same kind of business cooperative outcomes. COPAC and the emerging solidarity economy movement in South Africa rejects this. The future for cooperatives in South Africa is through a bottom up, democratic and transformative movement: the solidarity economy!

For more info, check out:

ICA official website for the IYC:
<http://www.2012.coop/>

UN website for the IYC:
<http://www.un.org/en/events/coopsyear/>

National News

Ntaba Ka Ndoda Heritage and Development Centre Engages with the Solidarity Economy

By Vukile Macingwana (Ntaba Ka Ndoda Heritage and Development Centre)



Background

The mountain and the monument on top of it, Ntaba Ka Ndoda, played a big role in Keiskammahoek and the rest of the former Ciskei during the rule of L.L. Sebe. Besides the politics of it, it brought hope to the people and played a role in uniting and developing Ciskei. A testament to its symbolic importance is the fact that many Xhosa poets wrote about it, and the grave of the great Chief Maqoma lies there as well.

The New Movement

After L.L. Sebe was overthrown, the monument was vandalised; most people forgot its importance. Our intention as the Ntaba Ka Ndoda Heritage and Development Centre is to use that symbolic power of Ntaba Ka Ndoda to bring unity back, preserve our culture and tradition, build ubuntu and be a centre for driving economic and social development in the Keiskammahoek region.

At the moment we are focusing on the Keiskammahoek South region, in the Eastern Cape, covering 13 villages that are in the region of Ntaba Ka Ndoda. After some time, once we have become more well developed and institutionalised, we will extend our activities to the North as well.

We are currently running programmes on the following:

The Heritage Event - This is a festival that takes place every year on heritage day, where we promote and include activities on culture, tradition, heritage, the arts and sport.

Education - We are working with Rhodes University on promoting maths, science and technology education.

Agriculture - We are focusing on developing cooperatives with existing farmers under the Zanyokwe Irrigation Scheme. We have attended workshops with COPAC where we were introduced to a more transformative approach to the role of cooperatives that aims at collective benefit rather than only individuals.

Tourism - We have wonderful landscapes, valleys and mountains as well as history and hence so much to share with people from the rest of South African and the world.



In taking forward our vision we have started working with two important organisations, namely RULIV (Rural Livelihoods) and COPAC (Cooperative and Policy Alternative Centre). In February of this year we had workshops with COPAC and RULIV. Through COPAC we were introduced to the concept of the solidarity economy, which is about grassroots and democratic development, informed by values and principles like

democracy, self management and collective ownership and benefit. This workshop was useful to our villages and Ntaba Ka Ndoda because it promotes humanity and peaceful living and working together: we put animals, plants and people before money. This had an important link to our subsequent workshop with RULIV, which was about introducing the concept and process of the Integrated Community Development Plan (ICDP), which is a development plan that is made by us as communities putting forward what our needs are. It also highlighted the importance of mobilising what we already have for development, like our skills and existing assets, as well as, how to work with government rather than just waiting.

Through these processes we aim to make our villages better places to live and work.

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Bulungula Incubator Continues its Good Work as it Grows from Strength to Strength

By Nkululeko Ndlovu (Bulungula Incubator)

The Bulungula Incubator (BI) is a Not-For-Profit Association based in Nqileni Village in the Xhora Mouth Administrative Area of the Eastern Cape, located on the beautiful Wild Coast. Nqileni is the most remote village in one of the poorest districts in South Africa (Amathole District Municipality). The Village is without any basic services. Until about a year ago, the municipal road stopped 3 km from the village. Access into the village was by foot or 4x4 only. The nearest clinic is a 2 hour walk (6 km) from the village and the closest hospital is 1½ hours (24 km) drive by 4x4. Almost all resident adults are illiterate and very few villagers from Nqileni have ever completed school.

The Bulungula Incubator has extended its services beyond Nqileni Village and now also covers the villages Tshezi, Folokwe and Mgojweni in the Xhora Mouth Administrative Area, a population of approximately 5,000 people.

The projects we run are grouped into focus areas in Education, Sustainable Livelihoods, Basic Services and Health and Nutrition.

The vision of the Bulungula Incubator is:

- To be a catalyst for the creation of vibrant and sustainable rural communities.



In partnership with our community, government, NGO's and other innovative thinkers, the Bulungula Incubator aims to achieve our vision through finding synergies between the traditional rural African lifestyle and culture, and external technologies and innovations. The Bulungula Incubator also aims to be an agent for change by influencing government and corporate policy in an effort to spread our vision more widely.

The BI currently has several projects in planning or operation in Nqileni and surrounding villages. Projects fall within four key portfolios, identified through consultation with community members as priority development issues. The four portfolios are:

- **Education** - To facilitate access to quality education and improved life opportunities
- **Health & Nutrition** - To improve the health status of the population of Nqileni and surrounding villages.
- **Basic Services** - To ensure access to clean water and sanitation facilities.
- **Sustainable Livelihoods** - To decrease levels of poverty in the village through strengthening and diversification of the local economy.

The idea with the Bulungula Incubator (BI) was that having lived in this community for many years and having worked through all the usual complications involved with development projects in communities like ours, we now had the social infrastructure in place to allow other people to come and work with us to implement their brilliant rural development ideas. Many development projects which are conceptually brilliant fail because the innovator underestimated the difficulty in trying new things in very remote, traditional communities. The history of development work in Africa is littered with failed projects that got hijacked by local elites, didn't take into account local beliefs and customs or were just introduced to the communities in the wrong way. We at the BI have been through all of this and have established a constructive, positive working relationship with our community and thus we can introduce new ideas or projects without having to worry that it will fail due to some unexpected community dynamic.

Laying the foundations for Solidarity Economy Movement building in the Zakhalani community Umlazi Kwa-Zulu Natal.

By Athish Kirun (COPAC)



The Zakhalani community is a small community made up of over 1900 residents situated in the township of Umlazi. Many of the early settlers came here to escape political violence during the late 1970s and '80s during the apartheid era. Post apartheid the community has experienced many challenges around access to basic services. They have been through six local ward councillors over the years and have not received support and development. This prompted the community to collectively organise themselves around their struggles. In November 2010 they set up a community fund and started saving meagre funds toward local development. They conducted their own research on enumerating themselves, mapping their area, house by house, checking how many people live there and who is employed as well as identifying how far they are from shopping centers and schools. They gathered this information to prevent any threats of eviction from the local council. Through their savings scheme they were able to build a crèche and connect water pipes to their dwellings for clean drinking water.

They have also initiated a small scale recycling co-operative to collect glass bottles, plastics, paper, steel and old clothes. However, the community still suffers from high unemployment, which has led to social problems such as violence, alcohol and drug abuse. This prompted some of their leaders to look at solutions in combating this scourge. With the support from COPAC they have recently embarked on co-ordinating and organising the first steps to build a local solidarity economy. The members have gone through the solidarity

economy guide training and identified 3 key areas of need they would like to start developing. The first area is the development of worker co-operatives: a food gardening co-operative, bakery co-operative and community restaurant to feed the community as part of a local sovereignty campaign. Neighboring the community is the Mangosuthu University of Technology and a boarding school, which have showed promising support toward the supply of land and resources for a food garden. They would also like to strengthen their existing recycling co-operative and establish a construction co-operative toward the development of houses.

The second area of need is a community based financial savings mechanisms to improve their existing community fund. The development of a solidarity economy fund that allows for internal and external fund raising can greatly help households and co-operatives build up their asset base and give them access to working capital.

The third area of need is around building awareness and activism on the importance of the solidarity economy movement through the establishment of a local solidarity economy education and communication co-operative (SEEC). This will help the community in the long term to organize a solidarity economy movement membership base and coordinate their struggles.

The Zakhalani community shows promising initiative and potential to enable the development of a local solidarity economy and movement. This could grow into being a beacon of transformation in the KwaZulu-Natal region.

The Food Sovereignty Campaign

A decision was taken at the first South African International Solidarity Economy Conference in October 2012 to launch a national food sovereignty campaign. This is an exciting prospect. The work to do this begins largely in local sites, where effort can be made at developing local independence in production and supply of food, as part of building the solidarity economy and addressing hunger (and even unemployment). This section of the newsletter covers the topic of food sovereignty and news related to it.

What is Food Sovereignty and Why is it Important? *By Andrew Bennie (COPAC)*

Many households in South Africa do not have enough healthy food to eat. In Gauteng it is estimated that as many as two-thirds of poor households do not have sufficient access to food. This is because many do not have the money to buy enough food. But at the same time, even if we do have money, food keeps getting more expensive at the shops. So in order to keep having the amount of food we need for our families, we have to earn more and more to buy the same amount of food that we did before!

Here we see that even though as humans our bodies need the same amount of food, it keeps getting harder to get it.



Why is this so?

There are a number of reasons for this. Basically, it is because how our food is grown, bought and sold is not controlled by people and communities, but mainly by big corporations. The food that we buy at Pick 'n Pay, Spar and Checkers is sold at prices that give companies big profits, instead of at prices that help small farmers and make sure that communities can have healthy and affordable food. So in other words, the reason many people are hungry in South Africa is not just because they don't have the money to buy food, but because they don't have any control over the food system.

So what can we do?

We can do something! What if we said, "Ok, let us not be dependent on other companies and shops for the food that our bodies and those of our children need, let us take control of our food by growing what we can ourselves in various ways in our communities!" This means that we can aim to build food sovereignty.

What is Food Sovereignty?

Sovereignty means the same thing as independent: it means that we as people and communities control how we grow, share, sell and eat our food. So we do it democratically and together, rather than it being controlled by corporations. 'Food security' is a term that we hear a lot from policy makers, politicians, businesses and so on. It basically refers to whether or not households have access to sufficient food. But food sovereignty asks why there is hunger in the first place? Who produces food? Who benefits from its production? Who controls the food system? What are the environmental effects of how food is currently produced? The concept originated with the largest social movement in the world, La Via Campesina (Movement of the Peasants), and has been defined as "the right of all peoples to produce and consume healthy and culturally appropriate food which has been produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. It is also their right to define and own their own food and agriculture systems." It means reducing dependence on chemical inputs produced by corporations, local independence with seeds, forming supply links with other cooperatives and solidarity economy actors, so that a new system of producing and distributing food that serves human need is slowly created.

Building food sovereignty then also means we have to build new ways of producing things and of relating to each other as humans, which is where the solidarity economy comes in.



The solidarity economy provides some of the institutions, values and principles that are key to food sovereignty, like democracy, collective ownership, local control of capital, solidarity and the like that can take the form of worker cooperatives, solidarity funds, cooperative banks, farmers associations, learning and training cooperatives, and so on. Focusing on developing food sovereignty can be a driving force for building the solidarity economy.

At South Africa's first International Solidarity Economy Conference, held in October 2011, promoting a food sovereignty campaign to build the solidarity economy and movement was a crucial decision. This requires linking communities, organisations and small farmers and cooperatives into a united food sovereignty campaign that advocates for small scale farming, agroecology, the creation of democratically controlled and socialised markets, oppose water commodification to ensure sustainable water resources meet local community and individual needs, opposes the power of genetic engineering companies and their seeds, calls for land reform, and the support for a national food system whose first aim is production for people and not for profit or export.

Agroecology: An Important Component of Food Sovereignty

Agroecology has been defined as “the application of ecological concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable agricultural ecosystems”. It is essentially a way of farming that works *with* nature rather than *against* it. It provides inter-connections and for closed loop production systems, rather than high input-output production common to industrial agriculture. Conventional industrial agriculture farms in ways, like massive fields of one crop like maize, that would never be found naturally and so has to add many inputs like chemicals and fertilizers to try and keep the soil fertile and kill pests. But agroecology instead uses techniques like intercropping (planting different types of food together or next to each other), crop rotation, natural composting like animal manure and so on. It builds up the soil rather than breaking it down! It uses all natural resources sustainably. Agro-ecological knowledge is continually evolving, and what also makes it interesting is that it blends new ecological scientific methods with age-old indigenous and existing knowledge systems. So it isn't trying to reinvent the wheel, it recognises the importance of existing local knowledge systems. It is therefore an important part of food sovereignty not only for its ecological sustainability but because it also means we do not have to rely on corporate-produced fertilizers, pesticides and machinery, but rather on local knowledge and on using the gifts that the earth and people have to offer.

Agroecology is a crucial part of food sovereignty, because food sovereignty recognises that we depend on our mother earth for our healthy food and our overall survival, and that using agroecological methods is good for people and the planet!



Masibambane Unemployed Peoples Movement Occupies Land for Food Sovereignty!

By Athish Kirun (COPAC)



The Tsakane, Germiston branch of the Masibambane Unemployed Peoples Solidarity Economy Education and Communication Co-operative (MUPSEEC) recently occupied a three-hectare piece of land in their community on the 22nd of February 2012. The land is situated near the Tsakane Mall that houses a number of retail chain and franchise stores. MUPSEEC's membership base in Tsakane is made up of unemployed youth and retrenched factory workers, many of whom have been unable to find employment for the past six years. The members identified the large piece of land in the hope of starting up an agricultural worker co-operative to produce affordable, healthy, and nutritious food for their members and community. They have named their worker co-operative Hlanganani, meaning let us come together.

The occupation was initiated after the local council, on receiving the application for the land, gave an unrealistic response on the grounds that the worker co-operative will have to purchase the land. Unable to afford the purchase price the members then sought out solidarity in the form of political and technical training from the Democratic Left Front, Ivory Park SEEC and COPAC in occupying the land. The strategy employed by the worker co-operative was to begin preparation of the soil and seedbeds for planting on the day of the occupation. A flyer was created calling on the community to join in on defending the occupation, for donations of gardening tools, seeds and seedlings and for sharing of local knowledge and skills.

The co-operative has two sets of demands. The first is that the council gives ownership of the land to the co-operative. The second is for support in the form of start up financing for equipment, working capital and training needs from various government departments such as the Department of Trade and Industry Co-operative Incentive Scheme, Department of Agriculture and the Land Bank. The co-operative has developed a conceptual framework; strategic focus and business plan with the assistance of COPAC and will use these documents to demand support from the various departments. These documents outline their plans and design to plant a variety of vegetables through permaculture methods, initiate small-scale livestock farming, setting up a bakery and community restaurant and finally a community-training centre for agricultural training. The worker co-operative has not yet received any threats of eviction from the local council and is currently working on meeting with the council formally to outline their plans and demands. They are continuing to use local knowledge to learn and practice new permaculture techniques through solidarity links with the Ivory Park solidarity economy movement.

As unemployment, hunger and crime grows in the community of Tsakane, the Hlanganani worker co-operative is providing an alternative way to address these social and economic problems through the solidarity economy and food sovereignty.



New Report on Grassroots Resistance to the Corporate Power of Agribusiness

A recent report, published by La Via Campesina, Friends of the Earth International and Combat Monsanto, titled *Combating Monsanto: Grassroots Resistance to the Corporate Power of Agribusiness in the Era of the 'Green Economy' and a Changing Climate*, documents how grassroots and social movements across the world are resisting the imposition of genetically modified (GM) crops.

In a time of worsening climate change (with industrial agriculture being an important contributor), large corporations like Monsanto are trying to push GM crops on small farmers and peasants in the South, arguing that it is in their best interests as they assist farmers in coping with climate change. But this is far from the reality, and they instead often push farmers into debt while the agribusinesses make huge profits. But as this report shows, farmers around the world are fighting back. It is also very relevant for us in South Africa, as our government has adopted the use of GM technology, despite clear examples of its failures and as across the world agribusiness more aggressively than ever continues to push its false solutions.

Local Learning and the Food Sovereignty Campaign in Ivory Park, Johannesburg

By Andrew Bennie

Ivory Park is a township of about 120 000 people situated to the North-east of Johannesburg. It is a key site of building the solidarity economy, with an established Solidarity Economy Education and Communication Cooperative (SEECC) and a number of cooperatives linked to it.

As with most townships in South Africa, access to food is a difficulty for many households. A food sovereignty campaign was therefore devised as part of advancing the solidarity economy. 'Food sovereignty in an urban township?' you may ask. You may be surprised to know

that there is in fact significant potential for agriculture in urban areas. It can not only be a good way of producing healthy, locally grown food, but it also contributes to creating jobs.



A few small farming cooperatives already exist in Ivory Park, so there was already something to build upon in extending agriculture in the township. Focus has been turned to building local awareness around food sovereignty through planned things like a popular cookbook, community training, identification and use of land for farming, cultural activities and the involvement of public institutions like schools, clinics, public halls and so on for planting and spreading the importance of food.



Recently, trainers from the SEECC undertook three days of training with volunteer home food gardeners, who received equipment to plant gardens at home from the Gauteng Department of Agriculture. However, activists from the SEECC and farmers from some of the cooperatives, using their existing knowledge as well as additional knowledge gained from permaculture training received at Siyakhana Garden in Johannesburg, decided that they would independently conduct thorough training with the group of about 70 people. This training was conducted without any outside assistance, and demonstrated the importance of building and multiplying local knowledge to build food sovereignty and the solidarity economy in Ivory Park.

Activist Resources to build the Solidarity Economy Movement from Below

6 Great Websites that are useful for Food Sovereignty Activism

Key to building food sovereignty is that we empower ourselves as activists with knowledge. For those with internet access, such knowledge is easy to get. There are a huge number of websites and sources of information on the internet, but below are some useful websites.

- A ton of information can be found by just browsing websites, but as a tip, these websites will usually have an icon that will say something like 'Publications' or 'Documents' or 'Research' etc. If you click on it, then a long list of publications will appear that can be downloaded just by clicking on the one you want.
- Most websites also have a button on their home page that you can click on to receive email updates and newsletters. Once you've clicked on the button, it will usually ask for your email address and some other details. Fill these in and follow the instructions and you will be able to sign up to receive information regularly through your email. This is a great way to stay up to date and be informed of new research, publications and other information.

1. Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy:

www.foodfirst.org

This is a website of a research and advocacy institute based in the United States, but the wealth of information on it is useful for any context.

2. Oakland Institute:

www.oaklandinstitute.org

This is also an American website, but it has a lot of research on agriculture and food in Africa, especially on land grabs.

3. African Centre for Biosafety (ACB):

www.acbio.org.za

The ACB is based in Johannesburg, and as its website says, it "campaigns against the genetic engineering, privatisation, industrialisation and corporate control of Africa's food systems and the commodification of nature and knowledge. It supports efforts towards food systems that are equitable and ecologically sustainable, built on the principles of food sovereignty/agroecology. The ACB provides research, policy analysis, advocacy and knowledge sharing."

4. La Via Campesina:

www.viacampesina.org/eng

This is the movement that originated the concept of food sovereignty, so their website is a good place to source information and to keep up with their activities and what is happening globally around food sovereignty.

5. Indigenous Food Systems Network:

www.indigenousfoodsistemas.org

A network for people working on local and indigenous food systems. Contains a host of information that is related to land, economics, sustainability and human health.

6. Bits & Bytes:

www.bitsandbytes.ca

This is an excellent resource website for anything to do with food. It has a whole list of food issues, such as 'Food and the Environment', 'Food Sovereignty', 'Community Building', 'Food Culture and Practice' the list goes on. Just click on the topic you want, and there you have it! A whole list of publications on that topic will appear and just click on the one you want.



Further Resources on Food, Agriculture and Food Sovereignty

- **Food and Democracy: An Introduction to Food Sovereignty**
<http://foodfreedom.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/food-and-democracy.pdf>
- **Towards a Green Food System: How Food Sovereignty Can Save the Environment and Feed the World**
http://bitsandbytes.ca/sites/default/files/Grassroots_International_report_Towards-Green-Food-System.pdf
- **Food Sovereignty: Towards Democracy in Localised Food Systems**
http://www.ukabc.org/foodsovereignty_itdg_fian_print.pdf
- **People's Food Sovereignty Statement**
http://www.worldgovernance.org/IMG/pdf_0070_Peoples_Food_Sovereignty_Statement_-_ENG.pdf
- **Combatting Monsanto: Grassroots Resistance to the Corporate Power of Agribusiness in the Era of the 'Green Economy' and a Changing Climate**
<http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2012/combating-monsanto>

Call for Designing Exciting Poster for Food Sovereignty Campaign!

COPAC is inviting submissions for the design of a food sovereignty poster for the food sovereignty campaign. With your understanding of food sovereignty (from the information in this newsletter, the resources indicated, and your own knowledge and research), we are looking for groups of people to let their creative juices flow and design a poster that can be used as the main symbol for the food sovereignty campaign! Your submission can include your own art, or photos, as well as word slogans for the campaign, and should be designed on size A2 poster.

Those whose poster is chosen as the winner will receive a pack of COPAC resource guides as well as a book!

You can either send your poster by post or take a photo of it and send it in an email to: Athish at copac2@icon.co.za or Andrew at bennieand@gmail.com.

Deadline is 30 June 2012!



Tips for using the Internet for Activism Part 1



This is a series on educating activists on the power of accessing information through the Internet and bridging the digital divide. The first series will focus on basic Internet terms and definitions. We encourage all activists who are not computer literate to utilise their local Internet cafes and seek assistance from friends and family members who are computer literate to teach them the basic functionalities of using a computer and the steps below for accessing the Internet.

1. The Web vs. the Internet

The Internet is a vast 'interconnection of computer networks' that spans the globe. It is comprised of millions of computing devices that trade volumes of information. Desktop computers, mainframes, Global Positioning System units, cell phones, car alarms, video game consoles, and even cool drink machines are connected to the Net.

The Internet started in the late 1960's as an American military project, and has since evolved into a massive public spiderweb. No single organization owns or controls the Internet. The Net has grown into a spectacular mishmash of non-profit, private sector, government, and entrepreneurial broadcasters. The Internet houses many layers of information, with each layer dedicated to a different kind of documentation. These different layers are called 'protocols'. The most popular protocols are the World Wide Web, FTP, Telnet, Gopherspace, instant messaging, and email. The World Wide Web, or 'Web' for short, is the most popular portion of the Internet. The Web is viewed through web browser software.

2. Browser

A browser is a free software package that lets you view web pages, graphics, and most online content. Browser software is specifically designed to convert HTML and XML into readable documents.

The most popular web browsers in 2012 are: Google Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, and Safari.

3. http and https

http is a technical acronym that means 'hypertext transfer protocol', the language of web pages. When a web page has this prefix, then your links, text, and pictures should work in your web browser.

https is 'hypertext transfer protocol SECURED'. This means that the web page has a special layer of encryption added to hide your personal information and passwords. Whenever you log into your online bank or your web email account, you should see https at the front of the page address.

:// is the strange expression for 'this is a computer protocol'. We add these 3 characters in a Web address to denote which set of computer language rules affect the document you are viewing.

Tips for using the Internet for Activism Part 1



4. URL

URL's, or 'uniform resource locators', are the web browser addresses of Internet pages and files. A URL works together with IP addresses to help us name, locate, and bookmark specific pages and files for our web browsers.

URL's commonly use three parts to address a page or file: the protocol (which is the portion ending in '://'); the host computer (which sometimes ends in .com); and the filename/pagename itself. For example:

**To visit the COPAC website enter:
<http://www.copac.org.za> in your URL**

Source: <http://netforbeginners.about.com/od/internetlanguage/tp/the-top-internet-terms-for-beginners.htm>



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We invite organisations and activists to make contributions to the Newsletter through writing stories, contributing photographs or cultural contributions, such as poetry, art, songs etc.

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