2015 - 2024
INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF
AFRICAN DESCENT
Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW)
African Diaspora Earthcare Coalition

• ABI Organic Agriculture
• Black Belt Justice Center
• Center for Heirs Property Preservation
• Historically Black Colleges and Universities Environmental Justice Consortium
• Samuel Dewitt Proctor Conference Unitarian Universalist Association
A Robust, Evolved Post-carbon Remnant
Relocalization of Food Production in The African Diaspora – Healing and Organizing

• Food Sovereignty: Old-new economic models without strings.

• 21st Century evolutionary culture-building and governance.

• Healing reconnection of a vast network of local Diaspora nodes where people of African descent are relocalizing food production.

—Globally Interconnected, Local Environmental Resilience-building.
Agricultural Land Retention Priorities in the African Diaspora

• Produce healthy, toxin-free food locally.
• Employ holistic agricultural practices which enrich the soil and the Earth.
• Preserve local biodiversity.
• Determine agricultural land availability.
• Work through land retention challenges.
• Innovate strategies, models, and work-arounds.
• **1862** - Congress passes the Homestead Act accelerating Western migration by providing white settlers with 160 acres of public land (land taken from the Indigenous Nations). The Act led to the distribution of 80 million acres of public land by 1900.

• **1865** - After meeting with freed Africans in Savannah, GA – General William Sherman responded to their demands for land. In January, he issued Special Field Order 15 setting aside a huge swath of abandoned lands along the GA, SC, and FL coasts for Black families.
• **1865** - 40,000 freed Africans were settled on some 400,000 acres of land in GA and SC. Later that summer, President Andrew Johnson reverses the policy and orders the land be returned to the confederate planter oligarchy.

• **1865** - Congress established the Freedman’s Bureau providing for the redistribution of abandoned or confiscated lands to freedmen (up to 40 acres). The Freedman’s Bureau never controlled more than two tenths of 1% of the land in the South and President Johnson’s amnesty proclamation forced restoration of much of that land. Congress shut the Bureau in 1872.
1866 - The Southern Homestead Act opens up 46 million acres of public land in the states of AL, AR, FL, LA, and MS. Severe opposition to Black land ownership in the South, places obstacles in the path of Black farmers on the state level. Within 10 years, in June 1876 the Act was repealed by Congress.

In spite of neglect, hostility, and government sanctioned racial violence, by 1910 Blacks in southern states, had acquired over 15 million acres of farmland and controlled 218,000 farms.
Land Dispossession Timeline

- **1950-1975** - over a half a million African American farms went under, leaving only 45,000. In the 1960s the Black farm count in ten southern states (minus Florida, Texas, and Kentucky) fell from 132,000 to 16,000, an 88% decline.
**Present** - Black farmers own less than 3 million acres of farmland and comprise less than 1% of all U.S. farmers. Moreover, of all private U.S. agricultural land, whites account for 96% of the owners, 97% of the value, and 98% of the acres.

According to recent U.S. Census data, Black farmers own less than 3 million acres of farmland and comprise less than 1% of all U.S. farmers. Moreover, of all private U.S. agricultural land, whites account for 96% of the owners, 97% of the value, and 98% of the acres.
Heirs Property Challenges

- Partition sales and forced sale of property
- Property tax sales
- Financing
- Government programs
- Crops and timber
- Profit generating
- Improvements
- Diminishment of interests
- Property management
Black Urban Land Loss & Food Insecurity

- Approximately **ten million people** have been forced out of their homes through foreclosure and bank eviction from 2007 to 2013.

- The US response to food insecurity is to use access to healthy, fresh, and affordable food as a framework for analysis rather than address the pervasive structural problem resulting from the economic marginalization of urban communities of color by capital accumulation.
Evolution of Kenyan Coastal Land Ownership

• Kilifi is one of the 47 Kenyan coastal counties.
• The county is one of Kenya’s poorest counties with an absolute poverty level of 71.7%.
• It has a land area of 12,609.7 sq.Km and a population projection of 1,466,856
• 52,519.4 ha and 47,681 ha of land are used for food and cash crops respectively.
• The county has approximately 6,891 sq.km arable land with 5,407 sq km. of non-arable land. Forests cover 245 sq Km.
• 56% of the land is useful for agriculture while 44% could be made useful through irrigation and to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
Shift from Communal to Individual Land Tenure

• The 10 mile coastal strip was once a possession of the sultan of Zanzibar and was leased to the British when the East African Protectorate was established.

• The coastal land was bought by the British and became part of independent Kenya in 1963.

• Jomo Kenyatta (the first president of Kenya) implemented the practice of “willing seller and willing buyer.” Only those with money could own land within the coastal strip based on the law of supply and demand.
The Politics of Land Grabs

- Land without title deeds was thereafter declared trust land where the government settled “politically and ethnically correct” people leaving many of the locals landless/squatters.

- Many coastal people were left landless while upcountry people own fertile land in the region. This has been the cause of ethnic conflict since 1990 between the coastal and upcountry people. (watu wa bara)

- Private developers grab up beach property deny citizens the right to access and enjoy natural resources and public recreational areas.
Dispossession and Displacement

• Some squatters claim that their families were evicted from their land in 1960 to pave way for government projects which haven’t started to date.

• Confrontations between squatters and land grabbers/city tycoons are common in Kilifi.

• Some squatters claim that they were evicted from their land in 1960 to pave way for government projects which have never materialized.

• Confrontations between squatters and alleged grabbers/city tycoons are common in Kilifi.
Strategies, Models, and Innovation

• Agro-forestry: US
• Agro-forestry: Kenya – Komaza
• Organic Farming driven by people of African descent - ABI
• Heirs property retention - Purposeful reunification of fragmented families around land retention and economic self-sufficiency parallels Diaspora organizing,
• Land Retention Strategies.
• Returning Generation Farmers – Historically Black Colleges & Universities
• Diaspora Earthcare Coalition organizing and grassroots resilience-building.
• **Community Land Trust** – New Communities established the first community land trust in 1969 acquired 5,736 acres of farm and forest lands in Lee County, GA.

• **Revolving Loan Fund** – $1 million fund established by the Emergency Land Fund and the National Association of Landowners to assist landowners in thwarting tax sales in Alabama. Over ten-years ELF and NAL handled 1,000 plus land cases and saved over 50,000 acres.

• **Pooled Financial Resources** - Aggressive bidding at tax sales in order to restore land to the original landowner or a landless farmer in the community.
US Agroforestry and Regenerative Agriculture

- **Silvo pasture** – Combined agriculture and livestock grazing,
- **Ally Cropping** – Trees grow between rows of crops,
- **Forest Farming** – Food grown under a managed forest canopy.
- **Income producing land retention strategy.**
Agroforestry: Komaza Model
Kilifi County – Mombasa Area, Kenya

• Komaza is a forestry social business in coastal Kenya.
• This model trains small scale farmers, providing farm inputs including seedlings, tools, and then markets farmers’ products.
• Farmers receive initial income from early thinnings in 3-6 years; significant income from mature harvests takes 8-15 years.
• “Should Komaza pull out, Kilifi people would fail in this project due to fostered dependency – lack of seed, markets etc.”

—Diaspora Coalition Partner - Dr. Nancy Abwalaba
Regenerative Agricultural Land Resilience Models

Food and Land Sovereignty Economic Alternatives

- **Goal:** Create agricultural infrastructure and conditions that enable people to produce healthy food and feed themselves locally and regionally.

- **Community Land trusts:** grassroots-owned and democratically controlled non-profits formed to purchase, conserve, and sustainably steward land. A goal is to ensure reliable land access for the rising generation.

- **Farm Linking:** an online database matches socially disadvantaged farmers with land, and links emerging farmers with prospective sellers.

- **Farmer cooperatives:** a platform for growers’ to pool resources for bulk purchases, and to supply and market their products.

- **Incubation farms and farm hubs:** centers offering training programs designed to transfer expertise among beginning, returning generation, and retiring farmers.

- **Intentional Communities and Ecovillages:** residential platforms for economic collaboration
Regenerative Agricultural Land Resilience Models

Food and Land Sovereignty Economic Alternatives

- **Online crowdsourcing**: A broad-based public finance platforms.
- **Revolving loan fund**: A gap financing tool used to develop small scale farming. It is a self-replenishing pool of money that utilizes interest and principal payments on old loans to issue new ones.
- **Sou-sous**: A West African rotating savings and credit association—a type of informal savings club arrangement within a small group of people.
- **Tontines**: An investment plan of 17th century origin, used effectively to date in West and Central Africa for raising capital. It combines features of a group annuity and a lottery.
- **Village collectives**: A collaborating group of women’s kitchen gardens.
- **Micro-lending**: A process whereby small sums of money are loaned to economically stressed groups of small farmers who do not have access to credit and financing; cottage, and artisanal industries.
- **Slow Money**: A movement that provides small farmers with capital in the form of grants, investments, and low- or no-interest loans through local chapters, regional and national fundraising events.
• **Agroecology**: The study of ecological processes applied to agricultural production systems which encourages innovative management approaches.

• **Agroforestry**: Land management involving the growing of trees in association with food crops and pastures.

• **Biodynamic farming**: A method of farming that applies observation of nature as an interconnected whole—an organism endowed with archetypal rhythm, to a farming system.

• **Biointensive agriculture**: An organic agricultural system that achieves maximum yields from a minimum area of land, while simultaneously increasing biodiversity and sustaining soil fertility on a closed system basis.
• **Food NOT Lawns:** A movement focused on replacing urban and suburban lawns with food-producing organic gardens.

• **Organic gardening and farming:** An integrated system of agricultural and livestock production that enhances soil fertility and biological diversity without the use of synthetic pesticides, antibiotics, fertilizers, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and growth hormones.

• **Permaculture:** An holistic approach based on traditional agricultural practices that works with natural forces - wind, sun, & water - to provide food, shelter, water & other needs with minimum labor, and without depleting the land.

• **Seed Saving Collectives & Banks:** The practice of saving seeds or other reproductive material (e.g. tubers) from vegetables, grain, herbs, and flowers for use from year to year for annuals and nuts, tree fruits, and berries for perennials and trees. Seed banks store seeds to preserve genetic diversity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land (More than we recognize)</td>
<td>Cash flow</td>
<td>Heal from Diaspora and land trauma.</td>
<td>Climate change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desire to be self-reliant and feed ourselves.</td>
<td>Grant dependency</td>
<td>Reclaim food value.</td>
<td>Resource depletion.</td>
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<td>Historical land-relationship</td>
<td>Consumer mindset</td>
<td>Create our own local, national and international food systems.</td>
<td>Global economic instability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deep ethno-cultural knowledge of growing food.</td>
<td>Social cooperation</td>
<td>Create spiritual spaces to contemplate/shape our future survival; resilience;</td>
<td>Land &quot;grabbing Displacement and gentrification; loss of community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collective history and ancestral memory</td>
<td>Internal wealth production.</td>
<td>Use local food production for wealth creation leading to sustainable resilient communities.</td>
<td>Land paradigm trauma.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intellect and commitment; Multidisciplinary talents</td>
<td>We don’t know where the money is; subject to the institutional shell game.</td>
<td>Devise economic development strategies</td>
<td>Disruption and collapse of food supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community social structure/network</td>
<td>Mentality of “scarcity”</td>
<td>Connect local farmers Black-owned restaurants, caterers, grocery stores</td>
<td>Mega-agribusiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual foundation</td>
<td>Slavery “land trauma”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Loss of biodiversity.</td>
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<td>Natural medicine tradition</td>
<td>Need new models to combat structural systemic barriers and collaboration.</td>
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<td>LiCle Black investment in Black business.</td>
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<td>Indigenous interrelation.</td>
<td>Uninformed elected officials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to 1st generations of African American immigrant populations.</td>
<td>We live in “siloes.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Affirmation of our diversity as global Pan African people.</td>
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</tbody>
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**External**

- Climate change.
- Resource depletion.
- Global economic instability.
- Land "grabbing Displacement and gentrification; loss of community.
- Land paradigm trauma.
- Disruption and collapse of food supply.
- Mega-agribusiness
- Loss of biodiversity
- Little control over education system.
- Little Black investment in Black business.
Diaspora Organizing in Local Circles

• Vision what it means to be an environmental resilience-builder in your location.

• Identify self-care, spiritual, and cultural practices that sustain us in this work.

• Create an inventory of resilience-builders committed to food and land security for people of African American descent.

• Create an Asset Map of your area’s “state of resilience” including all work in progress.

• Identify additional resources needed to deepen; strengthen and expand the capacity of environmental resilience-builders.

• Plan how your local circle can best communicate, nourish, and be nourished by the larger African Diaspora network.
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QUAKER EARTH CARE WITNESS

CENTER FOR HEIRS' PROPERTY PRESERVATION

BLACK BELT JUSTICE CENTER

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

ABI-ORGANIC Agriculture Ltd.

SAMUEL DEWITT PROCTOR CONFERENCE
• Water access and quality issues,
• Sea level rise and subsiding land,
• Food Education (cont’d),
• Urban agricultural land retention,
• Rural agricultural land retention (cont’d),
• Rural and urban land connections.