

## In Brief—Food First’s Accomplishments of 2009 and Plans for 2010

**F**ood *Rebellions! Crisis and the Hunger for Justice*, written by Eric Holt-Giménez and Raj Patel with Annie Shattuck, is being presented by its authors throughout the U.S., Europe and Central America. To view videos of issues covered in this Food First book, go to [www.foodfirst.org](http://www.foodfirst.org) and click on VIMEO in the left hand column.

In 2010, we will continue to promote *Food Rebellions!*, exposing the roots of hunger and poverty and promoting the changes needed to transform our food systems. Food First is also working within U.S. based coalitions including the Community Food Security Coalition (<http://www.foodsecurity.org/>), the U.S. Working Group on the Food Crisis (<http://usfoodcrisisgroup.org/>), and the newly-formed anti-trust coalition, “Bust the Trust” ([bustthetrust.org](http://bustthetrust.org)). The Bust the Trust campaign encourages citizens to participate in the public hearings held by the Department of Justice (with the USDA) to look at the impact of monopolies in the seed, dairy, meat, and grain industries. Food First has been working tirelessly to amplify the voices of both farmers and consumers in this debate, and to hold agribusiness accountable for their role in the global food crisis, the destruction of family farms, and the epidemic of diet-related diseases affecting the country. Food First is working to strengthen the growing food movement by helping to set up a food justice tent at the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit this coming June. Join us to share in the lessons learned and hear of the exiting strategies being implemented by local food activists in communities across the country and around the world!



*Camerino Aparicio, of the UNITONA Indigenous Farmers Union of Puebla, Mexico, explaining the importance of pollinator habitat for sustainable agriculture*

In 2009 Food First developed tools for classrooms and community events designed to inform upcoming immigration reform discussions. *Caminos: The Immigrant’s Trail* is a 20-minute DVD with a companion study guide that engages viewers of all ages. *Beyond the Fence: A Journey to the Roots of the Migration Crisis* combines a travelogue with 15 background fact sheets and a Guide to Action. As public debate heats up, Food First will be using these materials to insert some fact-based reality into the discourse on immigration reform. Next we plan to make shorter vignettes of the DVD footage available on YouTube and social networking sites.

The Oakland Food Policy Council, an “incubation” project of Food First that will soon spin off as an independent organization, held its first meeting with a fully-seated council in September 2009. Now, they are drafting their first

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The Institute for Food and Development Policy - known as Food First - is a member-supported, nonprofit "peoples' " think tank and education-for-action center. Our work highlights the root causes and value-based solutions to hunger and poverty around the world, with a commitment to establishing food as a fundamental human right.

strategic plan with widespread citizen input. With seven active committees, the council is setting priorities for action in 2010-11. To provide a solid footing for this new organization, Food First published, *Food Policy Councils: Lessons Learned*, presented for the first time at the 2009 Community Food Security Coalition annual meeting in Des Moines, Iowa.

Food First's community-based work is sometimes under the public radar, but no less important to share with you. We are helping indigenous communities in the Mexican Farmer to Farmer movement restore pollinator diversity through a series of hands-on workshops funded by the CS Fund. Incorporating native pollinator habitat increases yields for small farmers while restoring a resilient healthy agroecosystem. We have also been working with farmer co-ops in Vicente Guerrero, Mexico on a business plan to develop local markets for local corn, non-GMO tortillas, and year-round fresh produce. Following the earthquake in Haiti, we have been working with Grassroots International to help Haitian farmer organizations provide food and employment to earthquake victims.

In 2009 *The Nation* magazine published a Food First exposé of the Gates Foundation's support for industrial agriculture and genetically-engineered crops in Africa. The article was based on our on-the-ground campaign work with the farmer's organizations and women's groups advancing the "We are the solution!" campaign. These small-scale farmers are advancing African agroecological alternatives in the face of the corporate-led take-over of African agriculture.

In 2010 we continue to amplify grassroots African voices in the policy debate abroad and here in the U.S.. We will also investigate, analyze

and expose the monopoly interests behind the aid policies directed at Africa. Our African Food Sovereignty newsletter—requested by African partners—provides updates to over 600 subscribers and organizations on the African continent regarding the actions and plans of USAID, the U.S. State Department, the Gates Foundation and other U.S.-based institutions. We are also working on a range of educational pieces—from peer-reviewed academic research to popular and public education materials on the hopeful solutions to hunger being advanced by African food and farming movements.

A new project, *Food Workers—Food Justice*, is entirely funded by your donations. This work is aimed at finding convergence between the food justice, immigrant rights and labor rights movements in the U.S. When we think of food workers, our minds jump to farmworkers. But today in the U.S. poorly paid and often undocumented laborers also work in food processing, retail, and restaurant sectors. Our cheap, unhealthy, and often unsafe food system (think food recalls) is built on the backs of exploited laborers working for minimum wage or less. To help address this neglected corner of the food system, we have convened a group of labor, immigration and food justice experts to advise us. In April we launched an e-newsletter on food and labor, and we have plans to begin food policy research directed at labor organizers, immigration reform advocates and food justice activists. We would like to do much more, but honestly, foundation funding is very tight these days.

A second new project builds on the *Food Rebellions: Crisis and the Hunger for Justice* book and public speaking series. We have invited leaders from local and international food movements around the world to contribute chapters to a

## Annual Letter from Food First Executive Director

Thank you for your generous support of Food First's work. You may already know that most of Food First's work is funded by donors like you. Because of the financial crisis, some of our donors had to cut back their donations. In an act of sacrifice and solidarity, others actually increase their donations in 2009. Whatever your contribution, we thank you for your continued commitment to the fight against hunger.



Two years after rapid food price increases pushed 200 million additional people into the ranks of the hungry, our food systems are still in crisis. There are now over 1 billion hungry people worldwide—including 50 million in the U.S. who the USDA admits are suffering from “food insecurity.”

Vía Campesina, the international peasant federation, insists that in order to be food secure, we must have *food sovereignty*—the democratization of our food systems in favor of the poor. Because, as one Campesino elder said, “When the poor are better off, we are all better off.”

The contradiction of growing hunger and food insecurity in the face of massive concentration of wealth brings new urgency to our global food movement. Over the last decade people's movements have been growing worldwide as citizens and communities strive to take back their food systems from unsustainable, unsafe and unjust corporate control. Your donations are allowing Food First to participate in building that transformative movement aimed at solving our deepening food and agricultural crisis.

There are hopeful signs that many movements within the global food movement are in the process of converging—rural with urban, north with south, practitioners with advocates. Even labor—the often neglected, but essential, sector in the food system—is making its presence felt.

We now hear promises from northern governments to support peasant farmers in the Global South, growing support for the U.S. Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act and Farm-to-School programs, and the U.S. Departments of Justice and Agriculture's first-ever workshops on the corporate concentration in agriculture.

Our diversity—a disadvantage when we are fragmented—can be our primary strength when we are united. The challenge for building a powerful food movement is to find ways to converge in our diversity. Our goal is to turn today's “rumblings of reform” into a powerful social movement that doesn't just patch up, but rather transforms our food system so that it becomes a source of health, jobs and justice.

I hope that you can tell how enthusiastic (and also overwhelmed) I am by the tasks on our plate for 2010 and beyond. After years of tireless groundwork by many individuals and organizations our food movements are on the verge of a quantum leap. Can we mobilize enough people to take back our food system; locally regionally, nationally, and internationally? We think we can. We are so very grateful that you are with us on this exciting journey to end global hunger by ending injustice!

*Eric Holt-Giménez*

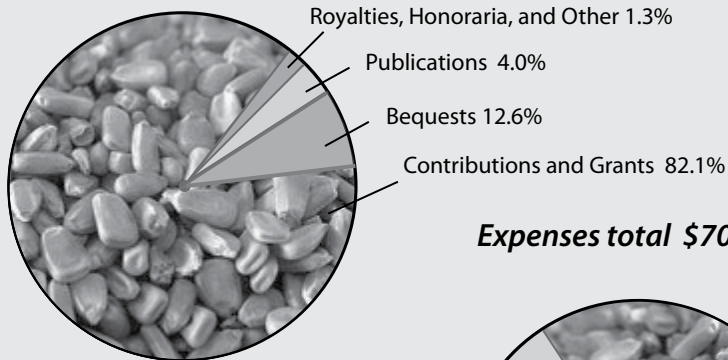
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "EAG". The signature is stylized and cursive.

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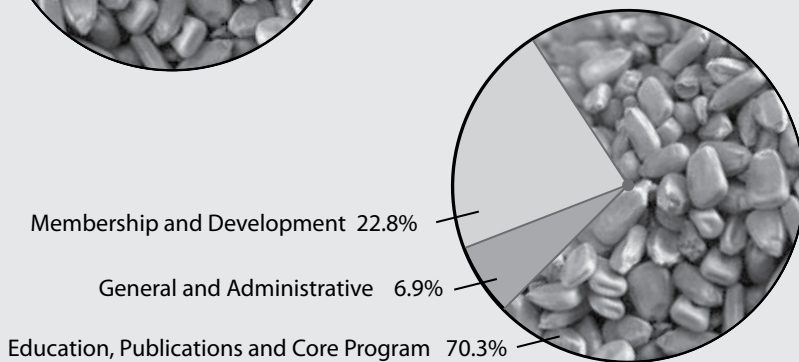
new book: *Breaking Through the Asphalt: Strategies for Transforming the Food System*. This project looks at the diversity of exiting food and agriculture initiatives springing up in communities around the world to ask “How can we work together to build a powerful food movement?” Authors include food justice activists—Will and Erika Allen, La Donna Redmond, Brahm Ahmadi and Anim Steele; food sovereignty leaders—Paul Nicholson, Walden Bello, Shalmali Guttal and George Naylor; labor leaders—Rosalinda Guillén, Lukas Benitez and José Oliva. The book will also include chapters from experts on immigration, political economy, land reform and agroecology; David Bacon, Harriet Friedman, Jun Borrás, Ken Meter and Miguel Altieri. Slow Foods leader Carlo Petrini and Josh Veirtel are also contributing important chapters. *Breaking Through the Asphalt* brings the voices of our “movement of movements” together in one volume and will be a powerful example of the convergence we seek in all our rich diversity.

## Fiscal Year 2008 Revenue and Expenses

Revenue total \$811,600



Expenses total \$700,113



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Your tax-deductible donations fund research and analysis that reveals what is beneath the often confusing headlines. And your support allows Food First to share information about the multitude of exciting innovations in growing and delivering food exploding around the globe.

Your legacy gift will ensure that Food First can continue to advocate for food as the most basic of human rights.

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