

Earth Rights Institute



www.earthrights.net

Earth Rights briefly...

Global Land Tool Network Program

ERI is now under contract for the UN Habitat Program to locally implement the Global Land Tool Network Program.

Humanitarian Aid

This year, ERI sent several containers to Nigeria and Congo.



Trees for a Sustainable Africa

In partnership with the Coalition for a Sustainable Africa and Global Green USA, ERI launched a reforestation and revitalization program, taking advantage of the *jatropha*, a biodiesel plant.

Opening of a new Office in West Africa!

After his visit in the US, last October, Dr. Dramane Touré, our partner from Ivory Coast opened an Earth Rights Institute in Abidjan to represent most of West Africa.

Winter 2007

The Partnership for a New Africa (PNA) is gathering signatures for African Unification, starting this year.



A word from the Co-Directors

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Warm winter greetings to you! We greatly value the partnerships and friendships we have made during the six years since we founded our organization. Thank you to everyone who has helped build Earth Rights Institute and inspired the several areas of endeavor that are now fulfilling our mission and purpose. So many of you have been instrumental in helping us advance our common vision to secure a world of peace and justice.

During 2007 our Humanitarian Aid and Ecovillage Development programs continued to move forward as reported in

this newsletter. One of the major highlights this year is our new partnership with UN HABITAT. After several years of building a relationship,



ERI 2007 Annual Meeting

Alanna Hartzok received recognition for our Earth Rights Policy work. We are contracted to develop a "land value capture" program within UN HABITAT's newly launched Global Land Tool Network.

With Annie's move to Los Angeles in 2005, she has built a base of support for ERI and strong collaborations with like-minded "cousin" organizations in the region. Co-founder of the Coalition for a Sustainable Africa (CSAfrica), she has developed new partnerships with organizations such as the United African Congress, Global Green USA / Green Cross International and UCLA.

This 2007 Earth Rights Review gives you the highlights of our activities and programs and includes the work of several of our Earth Rights partners. Thank you for your continuing interest in and support of Earth Rights Institute. We wish you inner peace and a purpose filled New Year.

- Annie Goeke and Alanna Hartzok

Help us continue the good work!

We need your help to continue our work to eradicate poverty and create sustainable partnerships to secure a culture of peace.

Please consider a donation by mail or on our website at www.earthrights.net.

Donate \$100 or more and get the recently published 'LEADING from within - Poetry that Sustains the Courage to Lead' edited by Sam M. Intrator and Megan Scribner. Foreword by Madeleine K. Albright and filled with a beautiful collection of 93 poems, accompanied by personal commentary from leaders in all fields included our Co-Director Annie Goeke! A great gift book for poetry lovers and activists!





The jatropha plant, African Panacea



Bicycles arriving in D.R. Congo

Trees for a Sustainable Africa Initiative

Together with the Coalition for a Sustainable Africa, and Global Green USA/Green Cross International, ERI has launched a reforestation and recovery program in West Africa, taking advantage of the jatropha, a biodiesel plant.

This program started with Dr. Touré's visit in Los Angeles, CA in October 2007. The overall goal is to achieve an integrated, mutually reinforcing set of development activities, in a number of different project sites on the African Continent.

It includes tree planting, tree conservation, and tree research initiative under the UNEP "Billion Tree Campaign." This program's purpose is to help conserve prime forest, prevent soil erosion, revitalize water sources and help offset carbon emissions. Importantly, it will strengthen the economies of the local communities, especially designed to help women and the youth.

The first phase of the project takes place in the northern region of the Ivory Coast, an area abandoned by the government and the nonprofit sector because of the civil war, since the mid-1990s.

More information at:

www.csafrica.org/projects.htm.

Million Signatures Petition for African Unification

2008 starts the Partnership for a New Africa signatures gathering campaign to push US policy to support for African unification.

Partnership for a New Africa is the collaboration of Earth Rights Institute, [Necessity Housing](#) and the [United African Congress](#). Our first major campaign is to heighten awareness and support a new Africa. For many years, Africa has been striving for unity and solidarity. We want our voices to join with the African people in the urgent need for political and socio-economic integration of the continent.

By signing on to this petition, we ask people to join many who are sending a strong message to national leaders both in the US and in Africa.

This petition will be used as an advocacy tool by the United African Congress, representing 3.5 million Africans in the U.S.

You can find more information and a link to the petition at:

www.earthrights.net/pna

In March, ERI will be part of a delegation to Gabon to meet up with top officials to discuss sustainable development initiatives.

Humanitarian Aid

In 2007, Earth Rights Institute organized three humanitarian shipments to Nigeria and the D.R. Congo.

ERI Program Coordinator Francis Udisi made a successful trip to Nigeria this summer. He raised \$15,000 to ship a 40 ft container of primary and secondary books donated by Books for Africa. This shipment went to our Nigerian partner [FREE](#) (Family Reorientation Education and Empowerment) to help local communities in the Niger Delta region. ERI is very proud to be working with FREE, one of the winners of the 2007 Literacy Prize from UNESCO. Francis updated us with photos showing how our previous donations had been distributed and used to benefit the local population.

ERI Program Coordinator Fr. Jean-Claude Atusameso has raised funds and organized shipments to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Two shipments have arrived, filled with bicycles, sewing machines, computers and other equipment including a compressed earth building machine. All these donations are helping build skills for our ecovillage population and poor people in Kinshasa!

We hope to further expand our humanitarian aid program this year to new areas in Africa. To do this, your support and donations are urgently needed. To learn more check out our website.

Dr. Touré: New Earth Rights Institute Director for West Africa



Dr. Touré (center), last October, with Annie Goeke, Barry Leneman and Blaine Pope

A traditional chief of the Senoufo community of Northern Ivory Coast, Dr. Touré has worked as a high-ranking official in many state departments in Ivory Coast. In the late 1970s he created the first "Green Belt and Urban Agriculture" project in Abidjan. He initiated many self-sufficient agricultural projects in other Ivory Coast cities. In the early 1980s he developed programs to support women's rights. A long time activist, Dr. Touré established nonprofits both in the environment and the social fields. He is the president of the Party of the Ecologist Union of Ivory Coast and was a candidate for the presidential election in 2000.

In the last twenty years, Dr. Touré has initiated more than 3 000 integrated development projects towards poverty eradication. Some of the programs include: promotion of women, fighting children's work and slavery, environmental and organic agriculture projects, education, health, water access, microcredit.

He is a well-known speaker at conferences in both Africa and Europe on poverty, environment and sustainable development issues.

He is an expert in sustainable development and promotion of "green" initiatives. A professor in Development Projects Management and Biodevelopment in several African universities, Dr. Touré has been a close colleague to Annie Goeke since 1991.

Earth Rights Policy Project with UN Habitat's Global Land Tool Network

During this year of 2007 we have been working to fulfill an earth rights policy contract that Earth Rights Institute has with the UN Habitat's newly launched Global Land Tool Network. Our project is the development of a land value capture educational and informational program which will be a basis for future implementation projects. Among the several components of the program are: descriptive brochures, an online course, analysis of several examples of this policy in practical use, a collection of quotes on land ethics, land rights and land value capture, and a web based calculator that can give an initial rough estimate of the "taxable capacity of land."

Note the diagram showing that land rent, which rightfully belongs to the people as a whole, is now about 30% of the total GDP of Australia. Most of this revenue – which is "unearned income" - goes to those who own the best and the most land and who play the real estate speculation game. Taxes on labor and productive capital take another third of GDP. The net incomes of both labor and productive capital have been decreasing in Australia, the United States, and in most other countries as the wealth concentrates at the top.

Now imagine what this diagram would look like if taxes on wages were eliminated and land and resource rent was captured for the good of the people as a whole. Wages and productive capacity would increase and there would be a much fairer distribution of wealth as land for housing and enterprise became affordable once again.

Annie and Alanna greatly appreciate the time and talent contributed to this project by a number of our associates working in teams throughout 2007. We will send out a special announcement when the project is completed and the documents and online course are officially available and posted on the GLTN website.

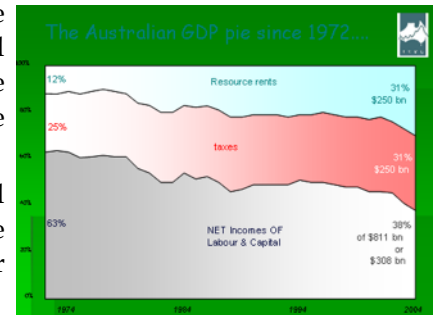


Diagram courtesy of Brian Kavanagh - Land Values Research Group

Alanna's Earth Rights Policy Report

One of our primary Earth Rights Institute missions is to promote "policies and programs which further democratic rights to common heritage resources." A very few people now own or control most of the world's land and natural resources. Many millions of people are unemployed, unable to secure a livelihood. Tens of thousands die from hunger every day. And yet there is a vast amount of land that could be utilized for food and shelter if only people had access to it. Land – a gift of nature – has become a market commodity used for speculation and profiteering rather than to secure the basics of life for all.

Earth Rights Policies are based on an ethic of equal rights to surface land and natural resources as the birthright of each

and every one of us. The policy of "land value capture" - also called "land value taxation" - secures this right via a proper structuring of public finance policy. Land value capture recovers the "socially created surplus value" (land rent) that attaches to land and uses this fund to finance public goods and services. A corollary to this policy is to eliminate taxes on wages and other productive activities.

When fully implemented, this earth rights policy eliminates speculation and profiteering in land and keeps land prices affordable for all. There would be no "boom" that would "bust" as we are witnessing now with the mortgage crisis. In fact, with affordable land and increased purchasing capacity (the result of eliminating taxes on wage labor) there would be much less need to take out mortgages and pay interest payments for housing. Plus funds that now pay for high land costs could instead go into building more housing which would lower and stabilize rental costs.



Alanna and her "Aradhana" ecohomestead flock of chickens in Pennsylvania

Where Peace Lives - a magical journey



New book by author Debbie Robins supports ERI and City Hearts (non-profit organizations who work for peace) by giving a portion of the proceeds

from the sales of the book.

Launched in May 2007, 'Where Peace Lives', rated as a best seller, is a book for all ages that shares the message of peace. Together with Debbie Robins, ERI and City Hearts developed a unique curriculum for after school programs for the Los Angeles area called *Where Peace Lives Peace Club*.

The focus of this monthly club is to create for children the life altering reference points for Peace inside themselves, their community and their world. An educational kit will be provided and will utilize the themes from the book characters as a creative gateway for learning Peace. Currently, the proposal is being considered for funding by the Ben & Jerry's Foundation. For further information and to order the book go to www.earthrights.net/peace.

Ecovillages update

Odi, Nigeria

Despite the many conflicts and difficulties in the Niger Delta, our Odi Ecovillage Living and Learning Center is

still determined to continue their important work.

Temporarily stalled by a shortage of funds to complete the construction on the site, members of the ecovillage decided to urgently seek sources of funding. Starting this February, ERI and Odi ecovillage members will embark on a serious fundraising drive - "We Love Odi" campaign.

Odi Ecovillage Living and Learning Center makes the news with the Voice of America. Caren and Nico Colombant, crews from VOA West Africa, visited our site and did a documentary on the project.

You can find their article at

<http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-05/2007-05-24-voa40.cfm>



Kibeti, D.R. Congo

The ecovillage in Kibeti, in the Congo has continued to expand its programs. Preparations are being made for the construction of additional buildings. The purchase of a compressed earth brick making machine has helped the people develop new skills. The learning Center in Kinshasa is providing training to NGOs and taking care of street children. We welcome support for this program.



Welcoming a new Board Member

Melissa Burns lives in the Washington, DC area. She is an economist and has experience in public health and other sectors. Melissa has worked in a dozen countries in Africa, as well as in Asia, South America and East Caribbean, focusing on resettlement projects. Melissa has a lot of experience with hemispheric organizations and NGOs. ERI is honored to have her on board.

Meetings and Conferences

In 2007, Alanna and Annie attended the following:

- ▶ 51st UN Commission for Status of Women
- ▶ 60th UN DPI conference
- ▶ UN Habitat Conference
- ▶ Eastern Economic Association Conference, Alanna presented a paper, [The Economics of War and Peace](#), on the Economists for Peace & Security panel.
- ▶ University of Chicago - Annie keynote speaker for Human and Environmental Rights Conference
- ▶ African Union Day NYC - Annie keynote speaker
- ▶ Huairou Commission and UN Habitat GLTN meetings in Kenya by Alanna to focus on the perspectives of how various "land tools" impact women.

ERI offers Free Online Course on Land Rights and Land Value Capture Policy



Would you like to learn more about how core issues of land ownership and control relate to the ever-growing wealth gap?

Find out by going to our website!

Learn More

www.earthrights.net
www.earthrights.net/pna
www.csafrica.org
<http://www.gltn.net>

Alanna's Journey to Kenya

As an Advisory Board member for the Huairou Commission's project work with the Global Land Tool Network, in October Alanna was invited to participate in meetings in Kenya with a group of 34 people including grassroots women leaders, urban planners, architects, NGO representatives, surveyors, academics and UN Habitat officials working with the GLTN. Huairou Commission is tasked with "gendering" all of the GLTN land tools. She heard a number of "case studies" of land rights struggles that grassroots women leaders are waging in their respective countries. "Gendering GLTN land tools" essentially means making certain that women are involved and engaged in the process and understand the land policies and their implementation and use. While in Nairobi, Alanna traveled with a group of women into the Mathari slums where she heard first-hand stories of the difficulties and challenges facing the homecare workers assisting AIDS patients. While medicine for AIDS was available, many of the sick people had no food. It was heartbreaking to once again see how many people lived crammed into slums struggling so hard to survive each day and to know that just three families of Kenya now own 11% of the land. There are large expanses of unoccupied land that slum dwellers could turn into beautiful ecological villages. This dream can become reality when their birthright to land and equitable land access is secured.

Her journey to Kenya also included an informational and networking meeting with Mungare Muchai, the Projects Director for the Green Belt Movement founded and headed by Nobel prize winner Wangare Maathai; discussions with a UN Environment Program official working with the Billion Trees program; and a consultation with the Director of the Regional Africa Headquarters for the Heinrich Bohl Foundation.

Thank you!

Our supporters and funders

[United Nations Habitat GLTN](#)

[International Union for LVT](#)

[FREE, Nigeria](#)

[Mercy House](#)

[Books for Africa](#)

Pat Aller

Hubert & Debbie de la Bouillerie

Children of South Africa (CHOSA)

Danielle Del

Paul Justus

David Lackman

Airetta Myrick

Robert Pallu de la Barrière

Nina Shaw

Jan Shephard

Jeffrey Sklar

Our Volunteers

Netta Ascoli, presently teaching in Spain.

Ben Bartlett, still working with us, works for television.

Erin Cheever, in Senegal doing a semester through the Living Routes accredited program in sustainable communities.

Mike Ewall, our webdesigner.

Elizabeth Farias, continuing her studies on nonprofit organizations.

Marsha Gifford, our dedicated grantwriter.

Katrina Greaves, continuing her degree at the university of Colorado with a major in International Affairs.

David Klein, is our new artist designer.

Perrine Vaillant, still with us and the Program for Torture Victims.



Barry Leneman, from Necessity House and Annie Goeke,
Elizabeth Farias, Katrina Greaves and Erin Cheever

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