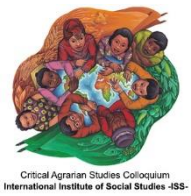

International Institute of Social Studies

Erasmus

EL FUTURO DE LA ALIMENTACIÓN Y RETOS DE LA AGRICULTURA PARA EL SIGLO XXI:

Debates sobre quién, cómo y con qué implicaciones sociales, económicas y ecológicas alimentará el mundo.

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NGO-University reflections on human rights based strategies for Food Systems Transformation

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NGO-University reflections on Human Rights-Based Strategies for Food Systems Transformation

Anni C. Bellows and Sofía Monsalve

Abstract

This paper presents FIAN International and university-based discussions of collaborative approaches to food systems transformation for diverse and integrated audiences using the human rights-based framework approach. Reflections are supplemented with case studies of participatory action research conducted by grassroots and social movements and the *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch* publication. The advance of peoples' control and *sovereignty* over the capacities and resources to realize their human right to adequate food and nutrition is mirrored in the foregrounding of their knowledges into public policymaking. What Meek and Rosset call, a "dialogue of knowledges" considers what feminist theorists have called the praxis of engaging standpoint epistemologies and situated knowledges and moving them into spaces of more open and equal discourse, training, and education, i.e., places with potential for mutual and horizontal learning on behalf of political work. Collaborative education requires the ascendancy of confidence in local knowledges, capabilities, and authority which can be augmented through civil society organizations, informal and formal education networks, and the implementation of public sector obligations to promote concurrently both participation in public policy and training in human rights to do so. Broadly available, practical, and active methods for collaborative political education include: open spaces to popularize ostracized voices, closed spaces for marginalized voices to gain confidence and build allies, public tribunals, private places to collect and transcribe testimony, *funding* for non-traditional participants, bringing discussion to new participants instead of making them travel, advancing new voices and coping with related political consequences, i.a. protecting human rights defenders.

This paper presents FIAN International and university-based discussions of collaborative approaches to food systems transformation for diverse and integrated audiences using the human rights-based framework approach

The progressive realization of an inclusive and universal human right to adequate food and nutrition requires a transformation of the global food system. This transformation must address power imbalances in governance structures and agri-food production. Democratic systems demand transparent discourse and participation between human rights holders and the duty bearers they elect in order to create public mandates for food system policy development, implementation, monitoring and recourse. Additionally food system transformation must reassess the prioritization of short term (more elite-oriented) wealth generation over longer term (more equity oriented) human and environmental sustainability. Rights-based systems insist upon the governmental obligation to maximize available resources for the most marginalized populations.

The human rights framework approach conceptualizes this democratic dialectical relationship between rights holders and duty bearers. The fundamental social engagement requires governments' commitment to the obligation to promote a practical understanding of human rights. The advance of peoples' control and *sovereignty* over the capacities and resources to realize their human right to adequate food and nutrition is mirrored in the foregrounding of their knowledges into the dialectic of public policymaking. But the authority and exchange of knowledge and experience is not merely a vertical, two-way exchange between governments and the people. It is expressed across different groups among "the people" in what Meek and Rosset, among others, describe as "global spaces of convergence", that is opportunities to learn and share political strategy through a "dialogue of knowledges."

Introduction: Knowledge as Praxis

Knowledge starts with the self, what we each experience and learn and personally discover.

The advance of peoples' control and *sovereignty* over the capacities and resources to realize their human right to adequate food and nutrition is mirrored in the foregrounding of their knowledges into public policymaking. What Meek and Rosset call, a "dialogue of knowledges" considers what feminist theorists have called the praxis of engaging standpoint epistemologies and situated knowledges (Haraway; Harding) and moving them into spaces of more open and equal discourse, training, and education, i.e., places with potential for mutual and horizontal learning on behalf of political work.
Such collaborative education requires the ascendancy of confidence in local knowledges, capabilities, and authority which can be augmented through civil society organizations, informal and formal education networks, and the implementation of public sector obligations to promote concurrently both participation in public policy and training in human rights to do so.

Describing 18th century England, EP Thompson (1971) argued that the moral economy is built around an unwritten social contract wherein people can claim a

right to food in return for accepting authority of rulers. A human rights approach takes a different approach to the social contract. There, rulers have authority and mandates for action based on the collective will of the people and on the obligation of both respecting and protecting peoples' self-determination and of prioritizing the rights of the most marginalized. In both interpretations of the social contract, food insecurity and famine indicate violations of the social contract and food-based riots may ensue. Democratic political institutions with administrative systems responsive and accountable to publics provide practical structure for social contracts and help to alleviate famines (Sen 1990:251). Similarly, constitutional mandates bolster the social contract and buffer publics from the vagaries of more and less authoritarian regimes.

In the modern era, multi-lateral human rights treaties strengthen social and political dialogue by ideally leveraging knowledge, resources, and political will across state actors through diplomacy and cooperation. Local and national publics' ability to share information and experience through a *knowledge dialogue,* and to organize quickly across wide distances, social differences, and international borders buoys the social contract, especially through democratized access to technology. Bohstedt employs Thompson to describe the 2007-2008 food riots across the world as "bargaining in the politics of provisions […] made possible by existing networks – solidarity among the common people [sic] and reciprocity between them and their rulers (Bohstedt 2016, p. 1035). Human rights can be understood as a tool and a strategy to promote participation and empowered leadership by those *experiencing* and therefore *best knowing* the conditions of human right to adequate food and nutrition violations.

Nation states have an obligation to promote education about human rights and related principles and mechanisms to their populace (UN-CESCR 2000, paragraphs 33, 37, 62).[1] It might be argued that this poorly observed obligation is designed less to educate rights holders about entitlements they might receive from the state, and more about their participatory and leadership roles to elaborate local policy expectations, and to monitor cooperatively and realize progressively their rights, including the human right to adequate food and nutrition. However, because the state is an actor in dialogue and negotiation with rights holders, it cannot be trusted with sole authority to deliver human rights education that inevitably leads to the contestation of state power. The state's obligation therefore should be to leverage cooperative human rights education strategies. Such collaborative education requires the ascendancy of confidence in local knowledges, capabilities, and legal and accessible avenues of recourse in times of conflict. Civil society organizations and universities can support maximizing and empowering disenfranchised voices and knowledge with the object of increasing capacities to confront the social contract that premises human rights protections and entitlements for self-determination.

[1] The „respect, protect, fulfill" obligations of the state are elaborated in the 1999 UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) General Comment 12 on the Right to Adequate Food (Article 11 of the 1966 International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)), especially paragraphs 14-20. Introduction of the "fulfill-promote" human rights obligation was initiated with the CESCR 2000 General Comment 14 on The Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health (Article 12 of the 1966 ICESCR), paragraphs 33, 37, 62.

A. Human Rights Based Strategies in a Civil Society Organization: FIAN International

As a human rights organization, FIAN has been relying on conventional measurement of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition and applying conventional methodologies of human rights work such as documenting violations of the right to food, conducting international fact-finding missions[2] to investigate alleged violations of the right to food and elaborating independent reports on the compliance of member states with their obligations in human rights treaties[3].

These tools have been very important in making visible discrimination, injustice and oppression, yet they present some limitations when it comes to decisively advance peoples' control and sovereignty over the capacities and resources to realize their human right to food and nutrition. For the established conceptual frameworks of the human right to food and of nutrition as recognized by UN agencies, the monitoring bodies of human rights treaties and the majority of governments are fragmented and do not fully resemble yet a right to food and nutrition which is embedded in a food sovereignty framework.

The "dialogue of knowledges" approach has brought FIAN to inquiry whether there is also a need to cultivate such a dialogue between a human rights organization and people struggling to transform their food systems. This obviously implies to review and complement FIAN's tools and methodologies.

We would like to share two concrete experiences how we are going about this.

A.1. Peoples' Monitoring Initiative

A.1.a. Monitoring: why an alternative tool?

Since 2000, and the development of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), monitoring and data generation have become an increasingly important tool for underpinning policy measures and interventions- but it is always important to question data- where it comes from, what is measures and who it benefits. The problem with monitoring hunger is that, as a concept it is something that can be defined and measured in different ways. The measurement often serves specific policy purposes, which in effect deeply influences the methods[4] and the results. Different bodies from the World Bank, the International Food Policy and Research Institute (*the Global Hunger Index)*, UNICEF and WHO, and of course the FAO (*State of Food Insecurity)* issued different measurements and methods for calculating the number of world's hungry and malnourished people. The formal adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[5] marks the beginning of a new phase of monitoring development - with all countries now working to translate the SDGs into their respective national contexts through the development of a national action plan. The implementation of the SDGs will be monitored through a set of some 232

[2] For a reference standard on how to conduct international human rights fact-finding missions see for instance the Guidelines on International Human Rights Fact-Finding Visits and Reports by Non-Governmental Organisations (The Lund-London Guidelines) issued by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of human rights and humanitarian law and the International Bar Association, available at http://www.ibanet.org/Fact_Finding_Guidelines.aspx

[3] See for instance the COMPILATION OF GUIDELINES ON THE FORM AND CONTENT OF REPORTS TO BE SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES TO THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES. UN International Human Rights Instruments. HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6 3 June 2009.

[4] Edoardo Masset, "A Review of Hunger Indices and Methods to Monitor Country Commitment to Fighting Hunger," *Food Policy,* vol. 36, no. 1, January 2011.

[5] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

global indicators[6] that were adopted by the UN General Assembly in March 2017. The monitoring process will be done at national, regional and global levels, as well as around thematic reviews.

Existing monitoring systems of hunger and food insecurity are largely based on quantitative measuring of calories intake, income or food related expenditures, agricultural production, inter alia, focusing on outcomes at the individual and household level. These monitoring systems rarely address issues of discrimination linked to socio-economic status, gender and race/ethnicity, disenfranchisement, patterns of ownership and access to land, labor and capital and more qualitative assessments of wellbeing and human capabilities. On the other hand those affected by food insecurity and malnutrition tend to be mere objects to be monitored instead of subjects who should have a say in defining what should be monitored and how, or the policy interventions designed with this data. In failing to utilize human rights based indicators, mainstream monitoring also lacks indicators and information that reflect the priorities of grassroots movements. Data is often misleading: how data is collected, how data is presented, and who is behind the collection is not always understood, but what is clear is that peoples' priorities and needs are not reflected, nor is the situation on the ground. Indeed, mainstream monitoring towards food security and nutrition fails to address the critical question around the social control of the food system, and in particular people's sovereignty over natural resources (as opposed to nature as a resource or service), and creates inferences and proposes solutions based on the current industrial model of production that feeds a global, and inherently unequal economy.

A.1.b. People's Monitoring Initiative: the methodology

There is an impending need for the food sovereignty and food justice movements to develop monitoring methodologies which better fit into our core conceptual framings around the right to food and nutrition and food sovereignty. Having these methodologies will allow us to better analyze our realities and thus to better inform the strategies and policy responses that we need in order to genuinely transform our food systems. They will also support broader based monitoring and advocacy across international mechanisms, regional and local platforms.

For monitoring the right to food and nutrition, FIAN has developed a methodology based on the Right to Food Guidelines adopted by FAO in 2004.[7] The Peoples Monitoring Initiative intends to continue developing this methodology with a participatory action research approach in dialogue with social movements, grassroots organizations and activist researchers. The idea is to put the voices of the most affected and the most knowledgeable at the center of the monitoring system, to build on policy developments that we have achieved particularly in the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and to facilitate the convergence of struggles related to the right to food and nutrition.

The initiative will remain flexible in its approach, and be tested, adjusted and fine-tuned as we move forward. [8]

[6] These indicators are being developed by the Inter Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators for final agreement by the UN Statistical Commission by March 2016 and thereafter adoption by the UNGA.

[7] See http://www.fian.org/en/news/article/screen_state_action_against_hunger/

[8] For more information on how to join, please contact Emily Mattheisen (FIAN International) at mattheisen@fian.org.

A.2. Participatory research process and fact-finding mission on the transformation of peasant seed systems and the grabbing of genetic resources in Burkina Faso and West Africa

The Convergence of Struggles for Land and Water - West Africa (*Convergence OA*) requested the Global Network on the Right to Food and Nutrition (GNRtFN) to document the transformation of seed systems through the massive introduction of patented commercial seeds and crops in West Africa, with as an emblematic example the case of Bt cotton in Burkina Faso. This mission is part of the follow-up to the Network's support to the *Convergence OA*, in particular the West African Caravan for land, water and peasant seeds which passed through three countries of the sub-region (Burkina Faso - Mali - Senegal) in March 2015 and involved organizations from 15 countries.

The countries and populations in West Africa are currently facing strong pressure to introduce GMOs and commercial and patented crops and seeds, in the context of a push towards the privatization of genetic resources. This pressure is exerted by powerful actors, especially large companies, with the support and complicity of institutional actors including governments – from Africa and industrialized countries - and international institutions. This surge is reflected, among other things, in initiatives which aim at changing laws that regulate seeds (often in the form of biosafety laws) which is currently underway in several countries of the sub-region. At the sub-regional level, the process towards the adoption of the sub-regional West African regulation on GMOs, aimed at creating the necessary legal conditions to facilitate the introduction of GMO seeds produced by seed companies, entered into a decisive phase on 5 February 2015 in Ouagadougou with the adoption by the relevant ministers of the WAEMU of the experts' report on the preliminary draft regulation on biosafety in Africa. These processes are accompanied by strong pressure on peasant and small-scale producer communities to force them away from peasant systems and make them instead use patented seeds for cash crops. The future of the seed and agricultural systems of West Africa is therefore at stake.

Burkina Faso was the first country in the sub-region to legalize the use of GMOs in the form of Bt cotton in 2003, which was then grown on a large scale in 2008. In 2009, 90% of cotton producers in Burkina Faso cultivated Bt cotton. The negative impacts on communities, their food sovereignty and biodiversity rapidly emerged, and today the victims of Bt cotton have organized themselves to recover control over their traditional seeds and to demand reparation for the damages suffered. At the heart of the GMO cotton-growing area of Burkina Faso, there are two active groups, namely the "*Collectif paysan de Houndé*" and the "*Syndicat National des Travailleurs de l'Agropastoral*" (SYNTAP). Although the cotton companies of the country and Monsanto have announced their withdrawal from transgenic seeds in the country, the impacts on the communities and on their farming systems persist. The case of Burkina Faso and in particular that of Bt cotton is therefore an example that enables us to understand the challenges and impacts on communities of the transformation of seed and agricultural systems currently promoted by agribusiness.

More recently, seed companies have launched initiatives to introduce GMO varieties of cowpea and sorghum, which are among the most widely grown food crops in the semi-arid and arid regions of Africa. Burkina Faso has been identified as one of the West African countries to experiment with these crops in addition to Ghana and Nigeria.

The objective of this mission is to initiate a process of participatory research and advocacy in order to strengthen the capacities of the affected communities and the organizations and movements of the *Convergence OA*, to support the networking of CSOs at all levels (mutual learning amongst local organizations, grassroots movements, national organizations in West Africa, African organizations as well as international organizations) and to strengthen advocacy for policies and laws based on the human right to food and nutrition within the framework of food sovereignty. More specifically, the objectives of this process are:

- **To document** the impacts of the introduction of GMOs and commercial crops based on patented industrial seeds on communities in Burkina Faso and in West Africa as well as on their agricultural and food systems, especially on peasant/traditional seed systems. The Bt cotton case will serve as an emblematic example and experience of the introduction of GMOs into West Africa.
- **To analyze the impacts from a human rights perspective**, identifying the abuses and violations (in order to advance on the analysis of GMOs under the framework of the right to food), paying particular attention to the abuses and violations of women's rights in the context of the grabbing and privatization of genetic resources.
- **To analyze the mechanisms** through which the privatization and commodification of genetic resources are promoted in West African countries on the basis of existing studies and research from the national platforms of the *Convergence OA*; this includes
    - To document the **harmful practices of seed companies**;
    - To analyze the **legislative and policy frameworks** in relation to seeds and biodiversity in Burkina Faso and in the sub-region, as well as ongoing processes that aim at amending them in order to promote the privatization and commodification of genetic resources;
    - To identify **the actors** pushing for the mass introduction of GMOs and commercial crops based on patented seeds and for the privatization of genetic resources in West Africa (seed companies and their institutional and State allies, including the role of industrialized countries (amongst others the European Union) and their regulatory frameworks, as well as international frameworks) and analyze their strategies;
    - To identify the **regulatory gaps** in West African countries, in the home countries of the companies as well as those at the international level.
- **To strengthen the strategies and advocacy** of the *Convergence OA* in their struggle against the introduction of GMOs and cash crops in the sub-region (national and sub-regional level - UEMOA / ECOWAS) and for the strengthening of peasant systems for the management of peasant seeds based on peasant agro-ecology within the framework of food sovereignty

and taking into account the analyses and claims contained in the *Livret Vert de la Convergence*.[9]

For this, the mission also aims to

- Strengthen the links between the human right to food and nutrition, on the one hand, and the rights of peasants to conserve, use, exchange and sell farm seeds[10] and the rights of peasants to seeds and agricultural biodiversity on the other hand;
- Contribute to the debate on the implementation of the rights of peasants under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA);
- Contribute to the recognition of a human right to peasant seeds and biodiversity as part of the ongoing process on a United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants.

The results of the mission and the analysis will be published in a report that will serve as an advocacy tool for the communities affected by the introduction of GMOs and cash crops in Burkina Faso and in other countries in West Africa, for the *Convergence OA* and in the processes which aim at advancing the human right to seeds and biodiversity.

B. Human Rights Based Strategies from the Academy

Academia has a role to play in the dialogue of knowledges toward social change. In the human rights framework, however, academia's traditional elite position must adjust to the goal of foregrounding the participation, knowledges, and leadership of marginalized groups and move over, make way, incorporate, and collaborate. Such collaboration generates key questions about social justice and power in the processes knowledge generation: Who actually has knowledge? Who needs and who can get related funding? How should knowledges be interpreted; who should do it? Where should it be disseminated and how, such that it is broadly accessible? How should the credit of publication be awarded and shared?

Sometimes a complement of CSO and academic knowledge formation strategies and individuals is productive. As an example, the journal *Right to Food and Nutrition Watch* (*The* Watch) is published by three public interest civil society organizations - Bread for the World, FIAN International, and Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO Cooperation) in order to leverage underrepresented knowledge and experience into global debates of food and nutrition policy. Themes and author selection are coordinated by an editorial board of civil society members and a few academics and is coordinated by the Watch Consortium, a group of 24 civil society organizations belonging to the Global Network for the Right to Food and Nutrition. The emphasis is on bolstering marginalized voices and experiences through narrative and analysis that reveal lived, but invisible or ignored, realities. Publication of such passionate knowledge can embrace marginalized voices, yet often discomfits traditional academics. As Ángel Strapazzón writes,

[9] http://caravaneterreeau.info/IMG/pdf/convergence_globale_des_luttes_pour_la_terre_et_l_eau_mise_en_page_1.pdf

[10] As stated under article 9 of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

> It is our words that forge, create, invent, disarm and organize. Those who wish to hear: listen. Those who wish to see: look. We have learnt from our teachers – the wise men and women from the mountains, rivers, seas, forest and gorges – that our words walk, and lead, our words forge and touch yet touch and forge: our words create (Strapazzón 2016, p30-31[6]).

In the gulf between what the social mainstream vs. "outside" perspectives consider legitimate or persuasive knowledge, the conventional tool of peer review is incorporated with a difference in *The Watch.* There, peers are usually civil society colleagues, reviews are rarely blind, and textual criticisms are addressed in teams (Bellows 2017). It is the common and complementary lived experiences of peer reviewers in *The Watch,* who are anxious to support marginalized voices and make them public, that drives creation of the needed space and encouragement to overcome elitist barriers to knowledge and policy formation.

The discomfiture of traditional science with passionate knowledge and activist peer review – among other forms of alternative knowledge production -- are anticipated and yet called for in the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD; McIntyre et al. 2009).[12] The six year IAASTD project, initiated by the World Bank and the FAO, drew on the work of over 400 experts from all regions of the world and found that massive investments in agricultural science co-existed with shocking and persistent conditions of hunger, poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition in over- and under-nourished populations, and ongoing degradation of the environment. The IAASTD called for participatory policy making and informed advocacy by underrepresented stakeholders in agricultural development, most particularly the food producers themselves, to address eight themes that surfaced, including: local knowledge and community-based innovation, the role of women in agriculture, and human health. Through a human rights lens, we can see IAASTD's rebuke of the failures of traditional agricultural science as a call to employ the principles of non-discrimination, participation, and the empowered engagement of those whose rights have been most violated, and for them to become centrally involved with the dialogue of knowledges forming social development and policy.

B.1. Misconceptions

In order for the academy to address the human rights to adequate food and nutrition, the subject must be legitimated through teaching, research, and service. Among many other academics, Bellows and colleagues have taught about the human right to adequate food and nutrition in universities in Germany and the United States for about 15 years (Lemke and Bellows 2015). From this admittedly limited perspective, she can report on experience with internationally diverse graduate students in a German agricultural faculty and on graduate and undergraduate US counterparts in food studies and allied disciplines. In both places, students generally express initial resistance to or skepticism of human rights course content. Program requirements, i.e., the Masters Degree (M.Sc.Agr.) in Ecological Agriculture at the University of Hohenheim and the Bachelors and Masters Degrees (B.S. and M.S., respectively) in Food Studies at Syracuse University, however, have made the coursework mandatory. Student misgivings include the belief or experience that human rights offer only idealistic and elitist salvo that conveys no substance, recourse, or accountability. Particularly in the U.S., familiarity with

human rights as actionable instrument of law is rare; points of departure can be civil and disability rights and only with rare (and contested) exception, economic rights. The majority of these social science and agriculture students hesitate to believe that they or civil society could engage legal language to their own practical ends. Explaining that such law only develops when civil society intercedes to transform it can be one of the most transformative lessons for students (and teachers). Presenting the binding obligations of human rights law as a practical strategy for food systems transformation – *and* underscoring academia's best role as support to civil society leadership – is one of the most challenging lessons for all academics.

Teaching reveals many misconceptions about human rights in general, and the human right to adequate food and nutrition in particular.

- Teaching the difference between conventional food security and human rights framework approaches delineates top-down versus bottom-up approaches to addressing food and nutrition security, the latter of which – i.e., human rights -- operates on the principle of accountability: how do people organize to hold duty bearers accountable to their obligations (Chilton and Rose 2009; Anderson MD 2013).
- Commonplace criticisms of countries that have ratified human rights treaties, yet fail to deliver on them, overlook the principle of progressive realization; human rights outlines *a process* for an inclusively developed and monitored plan for constantly improving human rights and not allowing retrogression of social progress.
- That *process* is not defined through the charity of delivered bread, but by the support, respect for, and protection of locally defined conditions of food system transformation based upon peoples' sovereignty and self-determination; social protection being a promise available when all else fails, to be delivered to honor human dignity and not create dependencies; and equality in public policy nevertheless discriminating limited resource distribution to the most socially marginalized.
- In the U.S. in particular, the complexity of recourse and remedy for human rights violations is generally understood as a function of expensive, timely, and elitist court systems; but while other important non-juridical arbitrative mechanisms are possible, their development and democratic accessibility are an immediate challenge for the practical engagement of human rights mechanisms (Valente et al. 2016).
- The lack of familiarity with a human rights framework and approach too food and nutrition, again perhaps especially in the U.S., induces a blindness to the international human rights social movement, notably the Global Network on the Right to Food and Nutrition; overcoming this ignorance could build international solidarity and effectiveness.

The value of learning a human rights framework approach to food and nutrition security is manifold. On the one hand, understanding and employing the human rights framework introduces a useful and internationally recognized strategy to collaborate and advance socially engaged knowledge production around the world. The "added value" of a human rights approach is its framework that is intended to maximize the democratic exchange of information and policy mandates between duty bearers and rights holders through diverse recourse mechanisms (Burity et al.

2011), a process which is designed to hold duty bearers accountable to their human rights treaty obligations. Institutionalized mechanisms behind human rights treaties invoke systematic monitoring, reporting, and analysis at local, national, and international scales. These mechanisms build troves of divergent observations on success and failure in the realization of the human right to adequate food and nutrition (Liebowitz 2014; Cresswell Riol 2016). Duty bearers seek to detail how they are meeting their obligations. Rights holders compile evidence to identify violations and pursue recourse and remedy. At the intersection of academic and advocate knowledge production objectives, academia can assist in revealing repressed or overlooked knowledges through diverse research methods, including community based participatory action research.

Two examples of human rights based strategies for food systems transformation through the foregrounding of rights holders' knowledge follow.[11]

In the first case, Roseane Viana investigated the Brazilian school feeding program and students' right to adequate food through a case study of *Quilombola* schools located in Macapá in the State of Amapá, northern Brazil. *Quilombolas* are African descendants and one of the most food and nutrition insecure groups in Brazil. One main objective in this PhD project is to investigate and describe the importance of available and accessible information in order to protect human rights within the School Feeding Program. The international human right to adequate food framework provides the conceptual basis with which to analyse the data. An exploratory qualitative method was employed to understand students' perception of the school feeding program in the context of the right to adequate food through data analysis drawn from participant observation, structured interviews (individual, focus groups, and experts), student essays, and field notes. Findings revealed both that a violation of the right to food was made by the regional judiciary branch which lead to a lack of food in the school, and that duty bearers and operators of rights recourse mechanisms dealt with the violation inadequately in part because they did not understand their roles and obligations under national and international human rights laws pertaining to the right to food. Dissemination of information and duty bearers' related obligations are critical for the enforceability of the right to food. Addressing dissemination of same was a primary recommendation of this part of the study. Researcher advocacy on local radio and through other venues coincided with reinstatement of regular lunch preparation and delivery.

In the second case, Food policy councils (FPC) provide fora for diverse public and private actors living and working within a community or region to cooperate on the improvement of the socio-economic health and well-being of residents and environments within an associated food system. FPC objectives include: information sharing, solution-oriented meetings that address conditions in a community's food system, coordinated advocacy that leverages traditionally marginalised voices and experience, programme development partnerships across the food chain, participatory research, and analysis. We are asking: to what extent can and do FPCs embrace human rights based approaches? Do they centralise participation and voices of most marginalised groups (especially in the United States?) without the experience of ratifying the ICESCR? Can and do FPCs operate

[11] This section borrows heavily from Lemke S, Bellows AC. 2016.

as recourse mechanisms that invite persons who experience food and nutrition violations (as rights holders) to: (a) document their and (c) participate in the development of solutions into violations of their right to food and nutrition? Research methods include literature searches, identification of five well-established FPCs in the North American northeast (US and Canada), review of charters and by-laws, review of FPC web pages, and key-informant interviews with FPC board members and leaders of public and private community actors engaged in the food system.

What does this tell about that part of academia that is ready to try to engage in the synthesis of knowledges? First of all, academia's access to knowledge resources puts it in a critical position to help (or hurt) grassroots groups' knowledge claims. Nevertheless, academia's role must be to support and perhaps to influence, but not to try to lead civil society knowledge expression. Second, academia needs to incorporate the political strategies, including legal strategies like human rights mechanisms, that CSOs and social movements use to leverage their work. In the context of the US, this can mean reframing excellent home-grown food justice work into international convergence of social resistance that engage a "global strategic framework" that includes human rights. Third, the human rights framework as political strategy, must be (made) familiar and accessible to the broad public. While this may be an obligation of the state, the failure of same to date surely makes plenty of room for academia.

Summary: NGO-university reflections on human-rights based strategies for food systems transformation

Practically speaking, inclusive and interactive knowledge sharing and generation requires broadly available, practical, and active methods for collaborative political education including: participatory community-based knowledge sharing and dialogue, open spaces to popularize ostracized voices, closed spaces for marginalized voices to gain confidence and build allies, public tribunals, private places to collect and transcribe testimony, *funding* for non-traditional participants, bringing discussion to new participants instead of making them travel, advancing new voices and coping with related political consequences, i.a. protecting human rights defenders.

Food system transformation requires collaborations across diverse social actors to contest the telescoping of control over food economies. In the end, the dialogue of knowledges at the root of such collaboration is both practical and personal, requiring mutual respect and protection.

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Nazioarteko Hizketaldia

ELIKADURAREN ETORKIZUNA ETA NEKAZARITZAREN ERRONKAK XXI. MENDERAKO:

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