2009 in Review

By Reid Mukai, Chris Iberle & Heather English Day

For CAGJ, 2009 presented the challenge of surviving and thriving as a small grassroots non-profit, while empowering our community with skills and information to build social justice. From the outset, 2009 was infused with feelings of anxiety and hope. In the previous year, the world experienced financial disasters on numerous fronts extending late into 2009: spikes in the price of food and energy, recession, mass unemployment, real estate bubbles, currency devaluation, collapsing financial institutions and a global debt crisis. War, pollution, global climate change, resource depletion and loss of civil liberties continued or worsened.

There was also hope, as Barack Obama was voted into office after 8 years of possibly the worst Republican White House in American history. In addition, faced with so many problems arising from the dominant corporate capitalist economic system, more people than ever were - and still are - becoming increasingly open to alternatives that support solidarity, economic & social justice, sustainability, and self-determination.

Building Community

CAGJ strives to cultivate community to build an inclusive food justice movement. Through bi-monthly Community Meetings, coordinated in 2009 by our Membership Coordinator, Alma Dea Michelena, CAGJ was able to motivate people to become more involved, and provided a way for members to share information, get to know each other, and build leadership skills. CAGJ’s Action/Study Book Group offered another avenue for involvement, and met throughout the year under the leadership of Victoria Gibson.

CAGJ built partnerships with other organizations in multiple ways in 2009. CAGJ’s annual dinner provided the opportunity for over 30 organizations to share their work with the public. We started off the year with the exciting news that we had been chosen to be a Community Partner of Central Co-op’s Madison Market, alongside BALLE Seattle, Black Dollar Days Taskforce and Sustainable Seattle. CAGJ marched May 1st for immigrant rights, and joined UFCW Local 21 for a protest and leafleting at Whole Foods in response to their CEO John Mackey’s editorial blasting Health Care Reform efforts. Teresa Mares, Food Justice Project Co-Chair, spoke at SLICE-Supporting Local Independent Co-ops Everywhere!, and the Fair Food Summit organized by Slow Food Seattle.

Education and Action for Food Justice

CAGJ organized several successful community gatherings in 2009 starting with the sold-out Central Cinema event in February featuring John Gibler, journalist and author of the book "Mexico Unconquered", and Jill Friedberg, documentary film-maker. The stories from Mexico demonstrated how small communities can win grassroots struggles for social and economic justice, an inspiring example for those of us in wealthier nations in the midst of shrinking education budgets, increased militarization of police and increased corporate and government control of mainstream news media.

In April AGRAG Watch presented popular 3-part series of free Short Courses at UW. “Technology and Revolutions - the Gates Foundation and African Agriculture”, organized and presented by Phil Bereano, Jen Krenz and Travis English.

Building on the success of our December 2008 Teach-In, the Food Justice Project launched a new program - Teach-Outs – Engaging the Local Food Cycle! Under the leadership of Teresa Mares, Andrea Hermanson, Jason Good- man and Molly Woodring, CAGJ members had the opportunity to visit different parts of Seattle’s food system every month. Over 50 people turned out for the first Teach-Out Event at Marra Farm on May 30! Teach-Outs engage participants in learning about food sites as well as doing work to support each place we visit with..(cont pg 2)
On June 5th, peaceful indigenous protesters blocking a road near Bagua, Peru were massacred by police. They were protesting a series of Presidential decrees issued under the U.S.-Peru FTA implementation law that would open the way for an unprecedented expansion of transnational petroleum, mining, logging and mono-cropping in the Amazon rainforest. In solidarity with the Peruvian movement for indigenous land rights, CAGJ’s Trade Justice Project helped organize two demonstrations, the first at the Peruvian Consulate, and the second at Representative Jim McDermott’s office, where we delivered the message to his staff that he pass no more flawed “free” trade agreements (such as the U.S.-Peru FTA which Representative McDermott voted for), that he support the TRADE Act, and that he take a stand against violent repression and unsolicited exploitation of natural resources.

In late November the People’s Summit marked the occasion for the official release of CAGJ’s first-ever publication, Our Food, Our Right: Recipes for Food Justice, featuring recipes of local activists and resources for getting involved in the food justice movement. This first edition of Our Food, Our Right was lovingly prepared over many months with the leadership of Food Justice Project Co-Chair Maria Rodriguez and Laura Brady, Valentina de la Fuente, Cheryl Kleiman, Molly Woodring and Aubrey Jenkins along with many CAGJ and community members’ contributions. It’s packed with great articles on growing, preserving, and composting food on your own, delicious recipes, analysis on local and global food issues, case studies of just food projects from around the world, and much more! In keeping with our commitment to social justice, the guide is sold on a sliding scale, and many copies will be given for free to local partners who will distribute them through their networks. The Food Justice Project is planning on publishing a 2nd edition in 2011.

On July 18 CAGJ held our annual fundraiser, the Strengthening Local Economies Everywhere Dinner and Fair. Held at a beautiful new venue, St. Demetrios Church, the dinner featured a keynote delivered by Steve Williamson of UFCW Local 21, pointing to the important challenges of building cross-sectoral unity for food workers’ rights. The fair was fun and educational, the dinner was delicious and well-attended, giving CAGJ the opportunity to publicize ongoing projects while honoring local food workers and farmers with over 400 supporters, members, and the general public. SLEE also raised close to $20,000 which makes up the largest percentage of CAGJ’s yearly operational budget.

In The Nation magazine’s September 21st edition, research of AGRA Watch Interns Travis English and Paige Miller was referenced in a critique of the Gates Foundation’s role in Africa written by our colleagues at Food First, giving exciting national exposure of our work to over 184,000 readers! In October, three CAGJ members attended the 13th annual Community Food Security Coalition conference in Iowa where CAGJ was awarded the Honorable Mention Food Sovereignty Prize, a great accomplishment! CAGJ is honored to keep company with La Via Campesina, who won the award, and the two other groups who received Honorable Mentions, Kenya-based ICIPE (International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology), and the Toronto Food Policy Council. The conference also connected AGRA Watch to several US and Africa based organizations.

Building CAGJ’s Capacity

At CAGJ’s February retreat, the Anti-Oppression Working Group was launched to assist CAGJ in developing a collective analysis of how forms of oppression shape the issues we work on, and to develop ideas for infusing CAGJ’s organizing with strategies to confront these injustices. Over the summer three CAGJ members attended Western States Center’s annual activist training conference at Reed College in Portland to develop activist skills and sharpen political knowledge. CAGJ built its fundraising capacity in 2009 through a 3 part training with Valerie Reuther thanks to a Satterberg Foundation capacity building grant, and a new Fundraising Chair position was created with Danielle Abbott serving in that role.

Despite the continuing recession and challenges, at the end of 2009 CAGJ was able to give a raise to our Executive Director, Heather English Day! Thanks to generous financial support from donors LIKE YOU, grants, events, and fundraising, we’ll be able to further develop our programs, reach more people and organizations, educate the public, keep the pressure on decision-makers, and continue to build the movement for global justice in Seattle and beyond.
CAGJ 2009 Project Reports

Food Justice Project

2009 was a busy year for the Food Justice Project!! Our Food, Our Right: Recipes for Food Justice was published in November 2009, after nearly a year of work on the project. The guide promotes knowledge sharing, and provides information on building hands-on skills such as preserving food, container gardening, dumpster diving, composting, and more. The guide has been very successful since its printing in November and Food Justice Project members have sold over 200 copies. Several local professors have chosen to use the guide as required class reading, and numerous blogs have also featured it. The guide is also available at Bulldog News, Left Bank Books, Madison Market, and Traditions Cafe in Olympia - we are always looking for new locations! Food Justice members also organized seven events for our new project: Teach Out! Engaging the Local Food Cycle. From learning about slaughtering chickens, to cuddling baby goats, to participating in a Thanksgiving potluck with the awesome youth members of the FEEST program, the Teach Out events gave us all an opportunity to learn about and engage in our local food system! Our Seattle-area visits featured guided bike tours to the sites, which gave new meaning to the food cycle!

AGRA Watch

In 2009, AGRA Watch had the opportunity to build stronger connections with Food First, Pesticide Action Network North America, Via Campesina, Oakland Institute, National Family Farm Coalition, and other national organizations that members of CAGJ met at the Community Food Security Coalition’s annual conference in Des Moines, Iowa. Through these expanded networks, our campaign has increased our visibility and has attracted enthusiasm in the Northwest and beyond. As well, AGRA Watch has built amazing connections in Kenya among members of the organic and anti-GMO movements, including the Kenya Biodiversity Coalition (KBioC), with whom we have already begun collaborating. In November, AGRA Watch led a workshop at the People’s Summit, that used interactive theater to challenge the Gates Foundation’s model for agricultural development in Africa. AGRA Watch members’ research was cited in the Nation, and an article will soon be published in Tikkun magazine, with other submissions planned for 2010. In 2010, AGRA Watch is planning a retreat to solidify and strategize around the campaign. We also hope to use our networks to bring scholars and activists to the Northwest to speak on topics of sustainable agriculture in Africa and resistance to AGRA, and are launching a new and improved website! We have also begun monthly film nights to bring attention to African agricultural issues, and reach new audiences—so far they have been a great way for new people to get involved! Upcoming films, at Cascade People’s Center: Black Gold, May 1; We Feed the World, June 5; Sweet Crude, July 3.

Trade Justice

Early last summer, CAGJ responded to the massacre of Peruvian protestors seeking protection of their land rights from the onslaught of extractive industries (whose floodgates opened as a result of the U.S.-Peru Free Trade Agreement). In alliance with our local partners, and in solidarity with the people’s movement for indigenous rights, we organized demonstrations outside of the Peruvian consulate and Rep. McDermott’s office, calling upon the congressman to reconsider his vote supporting the bill, while advocating on behalf of a balanced policy with the TRADE Act. Throughout the summer and fall, we planned the week-long events surrounding the 10-year anniversary of the WTO protests. We supported a diverse committee of organizations and over 1,000 participants in a series of actions. In addition to hosting a teach-in at Seattle University, the People’s Summit sponsored prominent speakers such as the Yes Men, Eric Holt-Gimenez, Amy Goodman, Representative Bob Hasegawa, Jihan Gearon, Dena Hoff, David Korten, Rev. Robert Jeffrey, Walter Hayden, and many more. The week concluded with actions surrounding the anti-mining/climate justice movement targeting Chase and the Bank of America, immigration reform, and an appeal to Rep. McDermott to revise his stance in past support of flawed free trade agreements, and sponsor the TRADE Act. Furthermore, we launched the Trade Action Network as a means to engage our membership in various advocacy efforts, and we intend for it be central to our strategy throughout 2010, so keep your eyes open!

AGRA Watch is the driving force connecting the local food movement & food justice issues. As a young, small-scale farmer, I am thankful for their activism! I loved hosting the Food Justice Project Teach Out! event last summer; it was a great way to connect eaters with food sources, learning more about how food is produced & understanding both the magic & obstacles that go into shepherding the seed, or egg, or embryo, into beautiful, fresh food. Is it possible for us to feed the world, fairly & justly? CAGJ gives me faith we will.

-Chandler Briggs
Island Meadow Farm
SEEKING DONATIONS FOR THE AUGUST 7 SILENT AUCTION!

It’s that time of year again, where we start getting ready for the annual SLEE dinner! We are hoping to make this year’s silent auction the best ever! And we need your donations to make that happen. Do you, your business, a friend, or family member have a service, talent, or item that can be donated? The sky is the limit - we encourage thoughtful creativity! Some ideas... 

...Weekend getaways - timeshares, cabins, train tickets, ferry rides
...Gourmet meals for 2 (or 10?!)
...Massages, Spa day
...Gift certificates - restaurants, movies, music, clothing...
...Tickets to performances and sporting events
...Art/crafts/photography prints
...Yoga/cooking/language/music/photography/sailing lessons
...Garden building/landscaping/yard work
...Party planning/prep, catering
...Taking a group on a hike/kayaking/snowshoeing
...Pet care

Your donations will help sustain CAGJ for the next year!
For more information or to donate, please contact Charity Burggraaf: charity.lynnne@gmail.com

Please Donate to CAGJ! Renew your Membership Today!

CAGJ depends on its members to sustain our organizing. CAGJ is proof that passionate volunteers make a huge difference, and every donation goes a very long ways. Please return enclosed membership card to renew or become a member & donate generously with your funds & time in 2010!

Thank You!
Thank You! To CAGJ’s Volunteers, Activists, and Donors in 2009

CAGJ is proof that the spirit of the Seattle WTO protests live on—courageous, compassionate, critical and community-driven. If we are able to achieve social justice in the twenty-first century, it’ll be because of the practical leadership of groups like CAGJ.
- Raj Patel, Author & Activist

Thank you all of the participants and community partners, farmers, and fisherfolk who hosted our Teach-Out events: Solid Ground’s Lettuce Link Program, The Umojafest Peace Center, the Danny Woo Garden, Loki Fish Company, the UW Farm, Jubilee Biodynamic Farm, Local Roots Farm, Clean Greens Farm, K-Jo Farm, Island Meadow Farm, Plum Forest Farm, & the FEEST Program at Youngstown Cultural Arts Center. Thanks to opening up your fields & kitchens to us, & for the amazing work you do to strengthen our local food system!


2009 Interns
Taylor Ames
Erica Bergmann
Laura Brady
Laura Brody
Daniel Burton
Amy Carle
Rebecca Jo Collins
Colleen Conboy
Valentina de la Fuente
Mariah Drogits
Kate Ellen
Kayla Gearing
Maggie George
Rebecca Gilley
Sophia Hansen-Day
Chantal Huynh
Emily Jarchow
Aubrey Jenkins
Caleb Johns
Minniwang Knoll
Molly Knell
Heather Lyons
Paige Miller
Lena Ng
Quynh My Nguyen
Michelle Vi Nguyen
Aiden Remington
Christine Ren
Bjorn Ruud
Kimble Snyder
Yecelica Valdivia
Whitney Wright
Jasmine Zhang

Rick & Diane Turner
Emelia Udd
Jenna Umbrici
Janet Van Fleet
Hoby Van Hoose
Sage Van Wing
Vanessa Vassal
Margaret Viggiani
Julie Wagner
webster walker
David Ward
Karen Wennerstrom
Kathrin Wilde
Steve Williamson
Amanda Witte
Michelle Woo
Ritz Wood
Molly Woodring
David Wright
Joanna Wright
Joyce Yee
Nicola Yshioka
Melissa Young
Daniel Zak
Debi Zerr

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS!
SATTERGER FOUNDATION & CENTRAL CO-OP’S MADISON MARKET

2009 Sustainers
Bill Aal
Danielle Abbott
Nell Abercrombie
Margo Adair
Erika Akuna
Cait Alexander
Lisa Anderberg
Maia & Guy Astley
Liz Atwood
Martha Baskin
Teresa Baskin
Nancy Beckvar
Mary Collins
Jeannine Churchman
Meesh Cobban
Fai Coffin
Mary Collins
Richard Conlin
Dominic Corva
Collete Cosner
Karen Cowgill
Tim Crosby
Christina Cummings
Nicole Dade
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Virgil Day
Timothy Day
Robert Day
Robin De Cock
Ashley Deforest
Susan Docekal
Jill Dowling
Gail Draper
Duskin Drum
Jessica Eagle
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Travis English
Jean Stuart Fallow
Andrea Faste
Ashley Fent
Jacob Fine
Abbie Flaxhammer
Susan Ford
Priya Frank
Syd Fredrickson
Jill Freiberg
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Anita D. Fernandez
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Seattle CISPES
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Strengthening Local Economies, Everywhere! Dinner

Saturday August 7, 2010

St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, 2100 Boyer Ave E, Montlake Neighborhood, Seattle

*Tickets go on sale May 15 at brownpapertickets.com*

Prices: $35 Regular, $60 Support a Farmer/Foodworker...Entry for yourself plus a local farmer or foodworker who will join us at the dinner as an honored guest! Volunteers get in for free!

**Happy Hour 4:30 – 6pm**

Enjoy complimentary hors d-oeuvres, libations & live music!

**Dinner 6 - 9pm**

Join over 400 CAGJ members, advocates, farmers, food workers and allied organizations for a scrumptious meal prepared by Seattle’s best chefs with locally-sourced and select Fair Trade ingredients!

**Keynote Speaker: Ben Burkett**

4th generation Farmer, Mississippi Association of Cooperatives Director, National Family Farm Coalition President, Via Campesina Food Sovereignty Commission

**Dancing 9 - 11pm**

Celebrate the global food revolution & dance the night away to African music!

**Don’t miss Joshphat Ngonyo, leader from Kenya!**

Thursday April 29, UW Gowen Hall, 7-9pm

“Dysfunctional Aid and Misplaced Philanthropy: African Farmers’ Responses to the Green Revolution in Africa”