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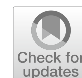
LOCAL/GLOBAL ENCOUNTERS



Planetary Food Commons and Postcapitalist Post-COVID Food Futures

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Abstract
The accessibility, availability and consumption of food in food and agriculture systems are key public health and food security concerns. We draw on empirical research from members of the Community Economies Research Network from Australia, New Zealand, India and Finland to reimagine food and agriculture systems as a planetary food commons (PFC). PFCs situate food-futures in relation to a broader post-capitalist commons sociality.

Keywords Food security · Diverse economies · Public health · Commons · Commoning · Post-capitalism

'They are indeed everywhere and always have been and they are what sustains us' (Sitrin and Sembrar 2020: 1).

In a recent paper, the UN Committee on World Food Security's High Level Panel of Experts lists the damage COVID-19 has caused: breaking 'food supply chains', loss of income and livelihoods; a widening of inequality; disruptions to social protection programmes; altered food environments; and uneven food prices in localized contexts'.[1] The latest UN State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic could increase the total number of undernourished people in the world by between 83 and 132 million in 2020.[2] These disruptions, in turn, have far-reaching consequences for human health. Political responses to the pandemic must, in turn, care for food security,[3] or risk compounding the consequences for economies, health and wellbeing.

COVID-19 has also laid bare what was already broken. Reports of deepening food insecurity in many places are perversely complemented by scenes of crops being ploughed into fields and livestock being culled for want of people to harvest and process. People are increasingly aware of the inequities of the global industrial food system, a system that generates hunger and obesity in tandem (Patel 2009; Heynen et al. 2012). Some commentators such as Eric Holt-Giménez argue that, rather than being broken, the global industrial food system is working exactly as it was designed, to funnel profits into the hands of corporations, which result in rising levels of hunger and malnutrition in minority and majority world contexts.[4] Whether it is broken or working as intended, researchers like Rob Wallace (2016) have already made the systemic connections between industrial extractive agriculture, biodiversity loss, malnutrition and the increased likelihood of zoonotic diseases, while Bruno Latour (2020) sees in COVID-19 a foreshadowing of the consequences of anthropogenic climate change.[5]

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[1] https://www.fao.org/3/cb1000en/cb1000en.pdf Accessed 3 October 2020.

[2] https://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/2020/en/, Accessed 10 October 2020.

[3] Food security is a contested term. The UN defines food security as 'a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'. https://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-fs/en/ In this article, we go beyond a dominant capitalist framing of food security that focuses on access to food through capitalist markets, develop a commons perspective and its enabling ecological, cultural and social conditions of possibility.

[4] https://www.organicvalley.coop/blog/eric-holt-gimenez-food-first-world-hunger/ Accessed 13 August 2020.

[5] https://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/P-202-AOC-ENGLISH.pdf. Accessed 10 October 2020.

Even as COVID-19 has revealed the major structural dysfunctions of industrial food and agriculture systems, it has also clarified the already existing webs of sociality and community resourcefulness that hold everyone together. We have witnessed the capacity of communities to respond to the challenges posed by the global health crisis with renewed practices of economic and social solidarity, and mutual aid. These responses are in themselves indicative of the collective effort required to sustain health—from ensuring people have access to fresh healthy food, to the emotional and psychological support engendered by simply being and working together in difficult times. We have seen the crucial importance of what the Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC) Group calls 'The Peasant Food Web'—a vibrant world-wide-web of economically and culturally diverse provisioning activities[6] involving women fisherfolk in West Bengal and Uganda, mixed farming systems managed by Indigenous communities in Argentina, small-scale pastured pig and poultry farms in Australia and the community gardens and gleaning activities of urban and peri-urban dwellers around the world. Hilmi and Burbi (2016) note that small-scale food production functioned as a 'refuge' during the Global Financial Crisis a decade ago, but in fact, these activities are the basis of food security for the majority of the global population.[7] These are responses that Marina and Sembrar (2020) and members of her collective find 'everywhere'. In this article, we respond to the present crisis and ask, how might the recognition of our being together, with and for one another, re-open the question of the relationship between food, agriculture, health, economic policy, and our shared survival with 'earth others' (Roelvink and Gibson-Graham 2009).

We, the co-authors of this article, are members of the Community Economies Research Network (CERN), a group of more than 200 scholars, activists and artists working in 20 different countries. CERN was seeded 25 years ago with the work of feminist economic geographers J.K Gibson-Graham, who countered the common-sense conflation of 'the economy' with capitalism and reframed economic activities as diverse, thereby recognizing the already-existing more-than-capitalist possibilities for a more liveable, just, sustainable, healthy and dignified world (Gibson-Graham 2006). Making visible the diversity of economic activities present in food and agriculture systems provides an empirical basis for a different set of food and agriculture policy responses, geared to enlivening healthy postcapitalist economies and futures.[8] In other words, redefining the economy in postcapitalist terms opens up the question of the commons for us that remain obscured in a capitalocentric framing.

In this article, we examine the question of the commons as a theoretico-practical inquiry which remains diverse, decentred and open-ended. Rather than offering a definitive positioning of the commons, we explore various forms, meanings and directions that commons take or could take in the future. The article thus, draws upon various theorizations and empirical works of/on the commons and maps commons sociality, extending it beyond discrete locations and communities. Such an approach pays attention to the possibility of commoning the spaces, relationships and practices that define a food system across a variety of locations and scales. The contributions draw on food security research in different national contexts: Australia, New Zealand, Finland, and India, to show the diversity of economic activities present in community responses to COVID-19 from the care and conservation of Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), to a range of collective approaches to food production, distribution and consumption.

What comes into view with this analysis is a planetary food commons (PFC). We understand the PFC not as a thing or singular commons but a function of our being and working in common. Certainly, its viability depends upon the care of global-scale commons, particularly those which cannot be enclosed—the atmosphere, the biosphere, and hydrosphere. In equal measure it is sustained by those things that do not exist except through their sharing–cultural practices of cooperation, exchange, and know-how–grounded in the particularity of place.

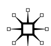
Commons Sociality

This article draws on commons-thinking in CERN scholarship that extends Ostrom's (1990) conceptualization of commons to develop an understanding of commons as a sociality that we can begin to discern, in whole or in part, distributed across economic relationships, practices and institutions. A key device which enables such thinking is the commons identi-kit which visually represents the political dilemmas of commoning—how we determine who can **access** and **use** a thing, define the community of **benefit** or determine the custodial practices of **care** (Gibson-Graham et al. (2013). Mestrum asserts that commons 'should be nothing more

[6] https://www.etcgroup.org/whowillfeedus. Accessed 9 October 2020.

[7] https://www.fao.org/cfs/home/activities/smallholders/en/. Accessed 9 October 2020.

[8] This framing of food system economies as diverse is supported by a range of research showing the vibrancy and heterogeneity of food system economies across the world—e.g. https://www.etcgroup.org/whowillfeedus and the UN Committee on World Food Security's recognition that smallholder territorial markets provide food security for the majority of the global population. https://www.fao.org/cfs/home/activities/smallholders/en/.



	Access	Use	Benefit	Care	Responsibility	Ownership
Commoning enclosed property	Narrow	Restricted by owner	Private	Performed by owner or employee	Assumed by owner	Private individual Private collective State
Creating new commons	Shared and wide	Negotiated by a community	Widely distributed to community and beyond	Performed by community members	Assumed by community	Private individual Private collective State Open access
Commoning unmanaged open-access resources	Unrestricted	Open and unregulated	Finders keepers	None	None	Open access State

Fig. 1 Commons Identikit Gibson-Graham, J.K., Cameron, J. and S. Healy. 2013. Take Back the Economy: An ethical Guide for transforming our communities. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 148

than the process of commoning', a framework for determining 'what we want to use and govern collectively' (Mestrum 2016: 114, 115). For CERN scholars commons-thinking extends beyond that which is formally commoned, a commons sociality and the sociality of commoning that improves and strengthens a commons (Gibson-Graham et al. 2016; Parris and Williams 2019). Communities need to be involved as active collaborators, as any commons can also be 'uncommoned': that is, destroyed, privatized, depleted or stolen (Miller and Gibson-Graham 2019). In our view, thinking like a commoner is vital for maintaining healthy food systems in the context of the pandemic.

Applying The Commons Identi-kit

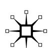
Gibson-Graham et al. (2013) developed the commons identi-kit as a figure that engages with, and partly simplifies, Ostrom's conceptualization of the system of 'rules' that govern commons sociality. The dominant approach to food security primarily emphasizes access to food in ways that encourage technical innovations to increase food supply. What a identi-kit calls attention to is the **use** and **care of** all the things, practices, relationships and know-how that work for common **benefit** by making food and agricultural systems possible. Ostrom's (1990) famous example of the Zanjera irrigation system in the Philippines shows how equitable **access** and **use** of a water supply was predicated on practices of collective maintenance. It is important to note, however, that this instance of commoning takes place on privately held land. For Gibson-Graham et al. (2013), commoning is a sociality that can unfold across an array of **ownership-types**. As a consequence, the politics of commoning can be extended across privately held properties which can be commoned whole or in part, just as open access resources can come under common management and new commons can be created as illustrated in Fig. 1.

In our view extending commons-thinking beyond formal commons in particular locations, and connecting it to diverse economic practices relationships and institutions, creates new possibilities for responding to the consequences of COVID-19. In what follows we reflect on two questions to extend commons-thinking:

What are the relationships between commons and processes of exchange (distribution)? How might commons-thinking reconfigure shared understandings of 'markets' as sites of diverse and supportive sociality which directly impact health?

What are the relationships between commons? For example, how might Mestrum's 'social commons', which foregrounds the state's exercises of custodial authority, interact with commons accessed, used, and cared for by community-based organizations? And how might these dynamics affect health as a social commons?

The second part of the article seeks to explore answers to these questions in COVID-times, drawing upon empirical research into commons and food security in Australia and New Zealand (question 1) and Finland and India (question 2). The aim is to compare how commons sociality works ingeniously and in disparate contexts to enable



food security. The authorial voice shifts as we move location but what comes into focus is a planetary food commons—not a singular thing but what Escobar names the pluriverse of commons.[9]

Commons Sociality and Exchange: Australia and New Zealand

Both Australia and New Zealand are considered to be food secure nations yet both have seen a steady increase in food insecurity over time.[10] In New Zealand the food price index has steadily increased,[11] and almost one in five children (19.0%) live in severely or moderately food insecure households.[12] People with disabilities,[13] Māori (Indigenous People) and Pasifika (Pacific Islanders),[14] and those receiving state welfare[15] are disproportionately affected. Similarly, Australia's largest food relief charity, Food Bank, has documented an increase in household food insecurity from 15% in 2017 to 21% in 2019 with women, children, asylum seekers and people in rural and remote areas being most at risk.[16] The cost of fresh food continues to increase in Australia (Barosh et al. 2014) and the food system is dominated by a supermarket duopoly which wield significant control over price and supply chains (James 2016).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, both nations experienced panic buying and lockdown restrictions that affected market access and, consequently, an increased demand for food relief. The relatively strict pandemic response by the New Zealand government prioritized human health but disrupted the country's food system, from production to manufacturing and processing, through to distribution, access and consumption. During various 'lock-downs' some farms and factories stopped operating; restaurants, food service outlets, and farmer's markets closed; and international trade was disrupted. Significantly, many social services that included some aspect of food distribution were either temporarily closed, or had to quickly adapt. The circumstances highlighted the multi-dimensional aspects of food security, and has affected people who had not previously experienced food insecurity. As a result, food security suddenly became a national matter of concern for many New Zealanders. In Australia, the pandemic response has also led to increased concerns around food security. For example, in July 2020 Food Bank estimated that approximately 1.4 million Australians were accessing food relief charities[17] although we know these numbers to be higher than estimated with charities in capital cities in particular reporting an increase in demand for food relief by international students, asylum seekers and the recently unemployed. There has never been an actual lack of food in either countries in recent years, with both nations producing a substantial amount of food surplus that is exported, redistributed or wasted. However, in both nations there has been a lack of **access** to affordable, healthy and culturally appropriate food that the pandemic and associated responses have exacerbated.

The redistribution of surplus food to charities in Australia is a practice that is deeply embedded in existing models of food relief revealing a diversely populated commons. Food relief charities operate on a variety of **properties** as school breakfast programmes, mobile soup kitchens, food vans, soup kitchens in churches or neighbourhood centres, as drop-in-centres, food box schemes and food pantries. Food relief providers have had to be resourceful in order to **access and use** the food by growing their own, purchasing or receiving it for free directly from food manufacturers, retailers, cafes/restaurants and farmers or from larger-scale food rescue redistributors: Food Bank, OzHarvest and Second Bite. The **benefits** of these diverse commons are shared by human and non-human others, as growing concerns with the environmental impacts of food waste are acknowledged by governments and non-government organizations such as OzHarvest which seek to address the concerns of food insecurity, health and food waste. **Care and responsibility** can be seen as demonstrated through the resourcefulness of the extensive networks of volunteers and supporters that constitute these food commons from growers to individuals. For example, Addison Road Food Pantry is supported by over 60 donors and their emergency food hub that emerged during the pandemic has supported over 27 charity groups in the Inner West of Sydney along with over 2000 people

[9] https://blog.p2pfoundation.net/patterns-of-commoning-commons-in-the-pluriverse/2018/06/08. Accessed 8 October 2020.

[10] https://www.foodbank.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Foodbank-Hunger-Report-2017.pdf. Accessed 6 October 2020.; https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/food-price-index-june-2020. Accessed 6 October 2020.

[11] https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/food-price-index-june-2020. Accessed 6 October 2020.

[12] https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/household-food-insecurity-among-children-new-zealand-health-survey. Accessed 6 October 2020.

[13] https://ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz/news-and-views/news/radical-reform-needed-to-save-disabled-children-from-poverty-new-report-reveals-worsening-picture/. Accessed 6 October 2020.

[14] .https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/focus-nutrition-key-findings-2008-09-nz-adult-nutrition-survey. Accessed 6 October 2020.

[15] https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/handle/2292/50490. Accessed 6 October 2020.

[16] https://www.foodbank.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Foodbank-Hunger-Report-2019.pdf. Accessed 6 October 2020; https://www.foodbank.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Foodbank-Hunger-Report-2017.pdf. Accessed 6 October 2020.

[17] https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/record-1-4-million-people-relying-on-food-charity-as-recession-bites-20200701-p55821.html. Accessed 6 October 2020.

who access the food pantry each week.[18] In addition, the contested role of the State can be seen through the provision of grant and programme funding for particular initiatives rather than through a sustained increase to government benefits that could provide people with a basic living income. For example, during the pandemic the City of Sydney (local government area) has provided further funding to food relief charities such as OzHarvest to support their 'pay as you are able' food markets[19] and the Addison Road Food Pantry[20] to support growing numbers of food insecure such as international students, asylum seekers and the unemployed. OzHarvest explains how they have:

> introduced a range of new emergency food relief services including; regular weekly Hamper Hubs for international students, a mobile market distributing food to regional and bushfire affected communities and pre-cooked meals by OzHarvest chefs and external hospitality partners.[21]

OzHarvest has a key focus on nutrition and sustainability evidenced in the food they provide and their Nutrition Education Skills Training programmes revealing an important emphasis on health as more than the provision of calories alone.[22] OzHarvest's NEST programme delivers healthy eating and simple cooking workshops in small group settings in Sydney, Canberra, and Melbourne. Workshop participants set healthy eating goals and learn practical cooking skills together, then share the meal they collectively prepared. In a recent programme evaluation, ninety-five percent of NEST participants said they were more confident about how to make healthy food choices on a budget.[23] Programmes like NEST highlight the sociality of learning how to cook and eat well together, improving the commons of health knowledge and practices shared by participants and their friends and families. Grassroots efforts like NEST support people's health and well-being in the broadest sense, providing essential social supports in the face of ongoing government ambivalence.

Similar to Australia, the redistribution of surplus food in New Zealand reflects a diversely populated commons, with local food rescue organizations working with food donors, social service providers and others to address both food insecurity and food waste. Prior to COVID-19 the New Zealand government and philanthropists had been working with existing food rescue groups (primarily KiwiHarvest) to explore a potential national food rescue network. The sudden surplus of food that had to be distributed during various COVID-19 lock-down responses due to market disruptions sped up implementation of what is now called the New Zealand Food Network (NZFN). The NZFN started operating during level 4 restrictions (April 2020) and has obtained NZ$5.5 M in funding from the Ministry of Social Development for the next two years. The ethos underpinning the NZFN is essentially the creation and management of a food surplus common to which a diverse community has **access** to reduce both food insecurity—with its undesirable health implications—and food waste—with its negative climate impacts. The NZFN will act as a broker to obtain and store surplus food and then redistribute this across the country to community partners who share it for **use** by their community. In the process the NZFN will gain efficiencies of scale and capacity by processing bulk surplus food in pallets from food growers, distributors and retailers, while respecting the autonomy and distribution practices of local food organizations. These actors also **benefit** by having an avenue to redistribute quality surplus food that would otherwise be wasted. Donors are required to deliver the surplus food to NZFN warehouses at their cost, taking **responsibility** to **care** for the food common, including food safety. Once received the food is logged, checked against food safety standards, and re-packaged if necessary. An algorithm is then used to manage re-distribution. Community partners seeking surplus food sign up to an online portal and describe their need and scale of operation (e.g. regularly delivering 500 meals per week), and capacity and infrastructure (e.g. chiller capacity, storage size). The algorithm processes the available food surplus and requests, and distributes this accordingly. Community partners can then access what is allocated to them and request it when needed, with the NZFN organizing delivery.

As Isola and Laiho (2020) suggest, the wide availability of surplus food in a market system means that its redistribution is an environmental and economic necessity, rather than charity or favour. The Australian example offers insight into the emergent nature of a diverse and networked commons responding to the immediate concerns of the pandemic and the inadequacy of government provision of basic income. The existence of substantial amounts of surplus food whilst people are hungry reiterates the wicked problem of food surplus in markets geared towards export. In New Zealand, not everyone is supportive of state support for the NZFN, arguing that it effectively subsidises over-production and will not help shift underlying wasteful and environmentally exploitative agri-food practices. At the same time, the emergence

[18] https://addiroad.org.au/news/feeding-the-people-addi-road-craig-foster-and-anthony-albanese/. Accessed 6 October 2020.

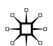
[19] https://www.ozharvest.org/ozharvest-market-waterloo/. Accessed 6 October 2020.

[20] https://addiroad.org.au/news/the-language-of-the-people/. Accessed 6 October 2020.

[21] https://www.ozharvest.org/ozharvest-market-waterloo/. Accessed 6 October 2020.

[22] https://www.ozharvest.org/what-we-do/nest-nutrition-education/. Accessed 6 October 2020.

[23] https://www.ozharvest.org/what-we-do/nest-nutrition-education/. Accessed 6 October 2020.



of a national food surplus commons in New Zealand, managed through the NZFN raises important questions around how more nationally coordinated, partially state funded approaches to surplus food could shift debates about universal access to food and health as a human right. Will these kinds of practices help to reposition people as commoners partaking in that good, rather than dependents failing to be good individual consumers? How might a commons-based food system, attuned to need, eliminate 'surpluses' that all too readily becomes climate-damaging waste? These examples provide evidence of shifts that illustrate the potential of commoning practices to address concerns around both food waste and food insecurity at scale and through diverse local initiatives in the here and now.

Commoning and the Public Good

Finland: Towards Localized and Inclusive Food Systems

With significant agricultural subsidies to ensure self-sufficiency and extensive government service provision allowing decommodification, Finland is generally considered to be a food secure nation. However, recent developments with the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated some of the structural weaknesses of the food system. As restrictions and economic downturn continue to threaten the country's food security, and thus the health and wellbeing of its citizens, the government needs to choose its path of action. This could incorporate more commons-oriented approaches, both in terms of organizing the public sector as well as creating new relations between the state and community economies.

The unexpected border closures and growing demands for both workforce and resources have exposed the instability of surplus food distribution and the insufficiency of national food production, in face of the health crisis. While a steady number of people have been dependent on charity food aid since the national recession in the 1990s (Silvasti 2015), the unemployment and layoffs during the past months have caused a surge in food insecurity that traditional charity organizations have had limited capacity to respond.[24] In addition to the food distribution, the restrictions have proven to be especially challenging for the primary production that relies on foreign seasonal workers to ensure sufficient food production.[25]

Despite revealing the vulnerabilities of food production and distribution in Finland, the pandemic has also demonstrated the possibilities for a more diverse and distributed food system. The most visible manifestations of this have been an increased interest in small-scale agriculture in both rural and urban areas, as well as the focus on ensuring self-sufficiency in the long-term.[26] These aspects were also recognized in the Committee for the Future report that urged the Finnish Parliament to support local solutions, citizen inclusion and participation post-COVID.[27] By enabling the localization and citizen engagement in food production, there is a possibility for the welfare state to reinstate the idea of food as a common responsibility and entitlement, beyond the current forms of exasperated commodification.

Having long traditions of foraging and appreciation of local food and self-sufficiency, the pandemic has further highlighted the need to protect the natural commons and to ensure the inclusiveness of surplus distribution. These intentions became clear during the first months of the pandemic, as a growing number of citizens gained a new interest in nature,[28] and came to assist traditional charities in distributing the food aid.[29] Whereas food aid has long relied on third sector actors and been considered something for the 'undeserving, disadvantaged, disregarded' (Salonen et al. 2018), the increased engagement in 'commoning surplus food' (Isola and Laiho 2020) demonstrates the possibility of a more participatory and inclusive food distribution.

In many ways, the response to COVID-19 has demonstrated a salutary community resourcefulness in particularly challenging circumstances. Such resourcefulness is important not only as a response to a public health crisis, but can be seen as a valueable yet often invisible form of collective agency in itself contributing to the functioning of the food system. Shedding light on the often overlooked social structures that sustain communities through hardship, the pandemic is calling for Finland as a welfare state to reconsider the role of government in emphasizing and strengthening the commons-orientation (Eskelinen et al. 2000). As there is no return to the *old* normal, the state will need to find balance between institutionalization and decentralization, considering not only the self-sufficiency but also the localization and inclusiveness of the food system, to ensure health and wellbeing of its citizens in the long-term.

[24] https://areena.yle.fi/1-50633823. Accessed 22 September 2020; https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11394293. Accessed 22 September 2020.

[25] https://www.hs.fi/paivanlehti/02042020/art-2000006459917.html. Accessed 2 October 2020.

[26] https://www.lapinkansa.fi/paakirjoitus-koronakriisi-on-todistanut-omavaraisu/760706. Accessed 7 October 2020.

[27] https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/naineduskuntatoimii/julkaisut/Documents/tuvj_1+2020.pdf. Accessed 2 October.2020.

[28] https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11418159. Accessed 8 October 2020.

[29] https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11503125. Accessed 22 September 2020.

India: Choosing Life, Choosing Commons!

Food security remains a looming concern in a country like India, where expanding global market linkages and industry based interventions in agriculture have been sought as solutions to food crisis. During COVID-19 slowdown,, the state-controlled agriculture sector has been further opened to free market forces through passing of new farm bills.[30] While access to food during the pandemic has become a major national anxiety in the Indian metropolitans, in the Rayagada district of rural Odisha, Kondh adivasi (an indigenous community) have been relying more upon traditional systems of food foraging, management, exchange and preservation. Dependence on forest produce, locally cultivated food crops and public distribution systems have helped ensure food sufficiency in the area. A community led organization of indigenous single women farmers in Rayagada, named Eka Nari Sanghathan[31] (ENS), has been working on concerns related to sustainable agriculture, gender, singleness, women's health and collective well-being. ENS was forged in 2013 by single women from Emaliguda village as a space to host relationships of care and companionship. Communitarian ethics, know-how and value systems driving adivasi life-world to which these women belong, have been the guiding-force of the Sanghathan. In an attempt towards redrawing gendered relationships and in transforming lives through collective living and caring, ENS has been engaging in collective management, cultivation and care of leased plots of land since 2017.[32] The **production, access, use**, appropriation and distribution of the food crops is done collectively.

The **benefits** of ethical commoning in the Sanghathan, extend beyond the human members of ENS. The land is considered as much a companion of the collective as the women themselves. In this regard, constant efforts are being made to move away from extractive inorganic farming to ecologically sensitive and sustainable farm practices in order to **care** for the commons. In spite of growing emphasis on cash-crop cultivation and marketed hybrid seeds in the area, the Sanghathan takes **responsibility** to cultivate local seed varieties of food crops in order to ensure food security and sufficiency. Local food seed varieties are preserved and procured from local farmers in the area on the basis of seed exchange rather than monetary transactions Moreover, natural fertilizers and plant-based pesticides are used in place of inorganic chemicals to sustain healthy life of humans and earth others (Chitranshi 2019). This post-capitalist agricultural common, embodied, sustained and managed in the Sanghathan, reflects back on the question of food security extending it beyond the human-centred ideas of health and well-being. Debunking human-centred notions of food security and agricultural productivity, Tulsi Pulaka, an 80-year-old ENS member, emphasizes the importance of healthy and ethical relationships between human and more-than-human forms for imagining and sustaining common and shared futures. She says,

> What we get after farming on the land is ours. Does not matter how much we get. That is up to the land to decide. It depends on the care we give to the land. When we care for the land, it takes care of us in return. We do not ask how much, we thank "dharti penu" (the earth spirit) for what she has to offer. When we use chemicals for enhancing production, we poison the land as well as ourselves. Our health and well-being is tied to the health and well-being of the land. When we think too much about how much, we tend to move towards death-death of the land, death of ourselves… but when we feel grateful for what we get from our land, we choose life.

Conclusion

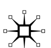
At the time of writing, it has been seven months since the WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. Both the disease and the economic consequences of trying to contain it have been profoundly disruptive. The likely impacts of the pandemic include an increase in global poverty and food insecurity with significant consequences for human and more-than-human health. This disruption has also revealed what was already broken–productive agricultural systems where some people are unable to access quality food while surplus food becomes waste, revealing the ecological consequences of a system designed to maximize profits rather than sustainably meet needs. At the same time, the response to this crisis has revealed a font of ingenious-mutuality–communities reconfiguring themselves and the infrastructure that holds us together. The position we have adopted in this article is that extending the concept of the commons allows a fuller understanding of how people and communities sustain collective health.

In the 'food secure' Australia and New Zealand we see a broad mobilization of social enterprises, state support and algorithmic coordination to connect food with those who need it. The benefits of this improvisational commons-redistribution are multiform–from physical and emotional health to addressing needless carbon emissions produced by food

[30] (https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/agriculture-bills-why-they-are-being-opposed/article32660189.ece. Accessed 7 October 2020.

[31] https://ekanarisanghathan.blogspot.com/. Accessed 7 October 2020.

[32] https://ekanarisanghathan.blogspot.com/2020/08/collective-agriculture-towards.html. Accessed 7 October 2020.



waste. In Finland we see how a capable welfare state could help with food security but also incentivize the development of local food and forage systems to create a more localized and resilient food system. In India we can see the power of collective effort to secure common-food futures pitted against a state-sanctioned modernist agenda that may serve to undermine it. In this example, the commoning practices of traditional knowledge sustain a different relation to place; one in which the land itself is recognised as an active participant in collective efforts to live well together.

Commons theorists have consistently emphasized the longevity of commons (Ostrom 1990). This has great importance for how we understand food security. This endurance is a function of an ongoing community-reappraisal of the terms of **access, use, benefit, responsibility** and **care** through time. There will likely be pandemics to follow COVID-19 (Wallace 2016). Further, these pandemic-disruptions mirror future disruptions that will come with anthropogenic climate change. If Latour is correct in imagining COVID-19 as a dress rehearsal for climate change, the expansion of our commoning capacity, in place and at a planetary scale, is necessary for our long-term survival.

Compilance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest The authors of this contribution is free from any conflicts of interest, including all financial and non-financial interests and relationships.

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