

ECOSYSTEM HEALTH: FOOD, ENERGY, CLIMATE



PEOPLE'S HEALTH MOVEMENT

In 2000, concerned activists, academics and health workers got together for the first People's Health Assembly, where the People's Charter for Health was developed and the People's Health Movement (PHM) was born. Today, PHM is a global network bringing together grassroots health activists, civil society organizations and academic institutions from around the world, particularly from low and middle income countries.

Guided by the People's Charter for Health, PHM works on various programmes and activities and is committed to Comprehensive Primary Health Care and addressing the Social, Environmental and Economic Determinants of Health. Equity, ecological well-being and peace are at the heart of PHM's vision for a better world: a world in which a healthy life for all is a reality; a world that respects, appreciates and celebrates all life and diversity; a world that enables the flowering of people's talents and abilities to enrich each other; a world in which people's voices guide the decisions that shape our lives.

In April 2024, PHM will hold its fifth People's Health Assembly (PHA5) in Argentina, bringing together activists from all over the world to share analysis, struggles and strategies around 5 axes that are key for the health of people and the planet:

- 1. Towards the transformation of health systems*
- 2. Gender justice in health*
- 3. Ecosystem health: food, energy, climate*
- 4. Resisting forced migration and war*
- 5. Promoting ancestral and popular knowledges and practices*

This booklet is meant to prepare and accompany the discussion of axis 2 "Ecosystem health: Food, energy, climate"



Health for All Now!
People's Health Movement



<https://www.phmovement.org>



People Tree Studio is an independent graphic design and art studio working with graphics, comics, murals, textiles and visual storytelling. It is based in Goa, India and is founded by artist Orijit Sen and curator Gurpreet Sidhu.

<https://www.peopletreestudio.com/>

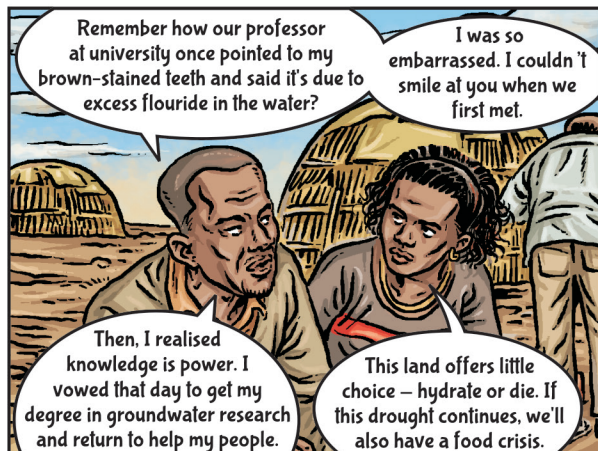
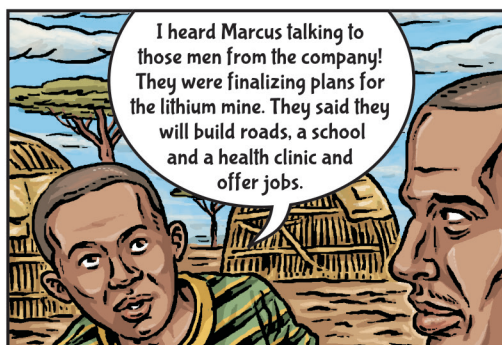
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WRITTEN BY CORDELIA B. FRANCIS. ILLUSTRATED BY HARSHO MOHAN CHATTORAJ. EDITED BY ORIJIT SEN.



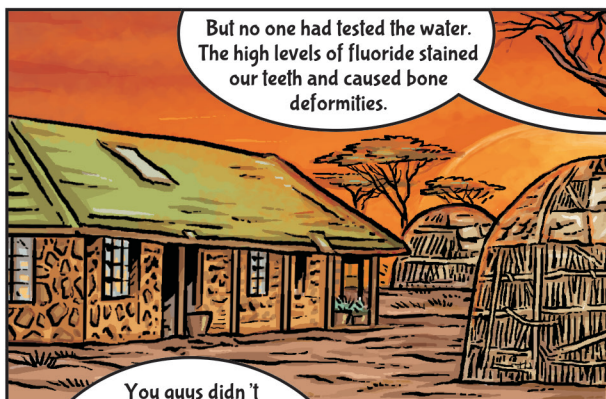


We made great progress today, guys. Good work.

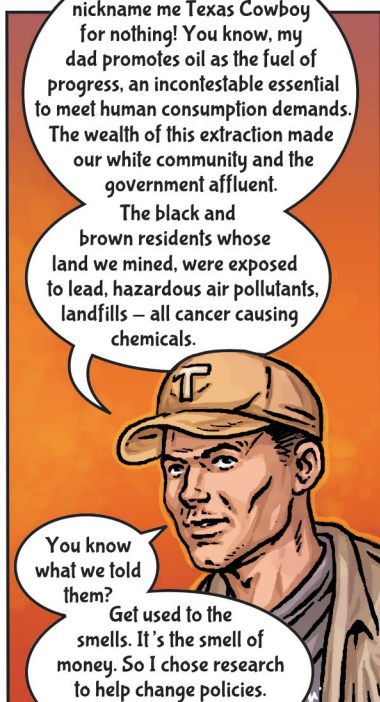
Buntu says work on the lithium mine is starting. Marcus is pushing for it. I'm worried...



As a kid, I'd graze the animals near the lake. Being a pastoral people, our animals are our wealth. We carried guns to deter any marauding villagers from stealing them. Then the government dug bore wells. It was a godsend. No more long distance walks to the lake.



But no one had tested the water. The high levels of fluoride stained our teeth and caused bone deformities.



You guys didn't nickname me Texas Cowboy for nothing! You know, my dad promotes oil as the fuel of progress, an incontestable essential to meet human consumption demands. The wealth of this extraction made our white community and the government affluent.

The black and brown residents whose land we mined, were exposed to lead, hazardous air pollutants, landfills – all cancer causing chemicals.

You know what we told them?

Get used to the smells. It's the smell of money. So I chose research to help change policies.



I had similar motivations. My country, the Philippines, abounds in biodiverse ecosystems that provide many people with a source of food and livelihood. But it also attracted an onslaught of extractive destruction.

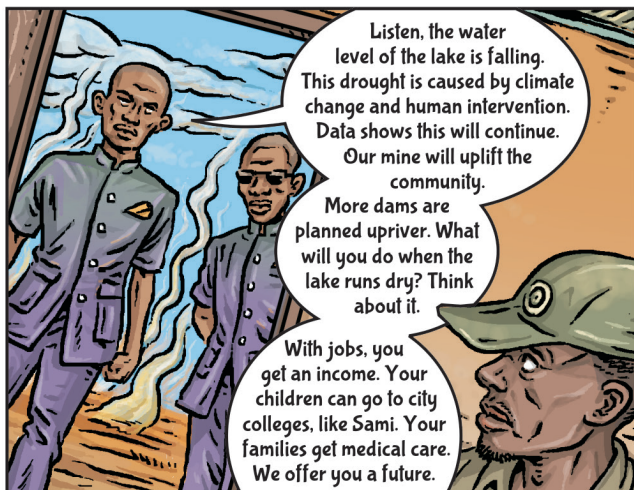
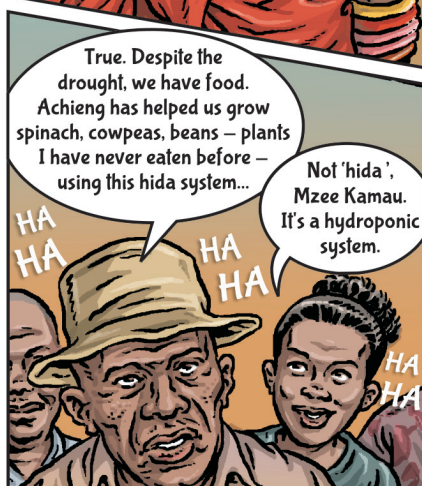
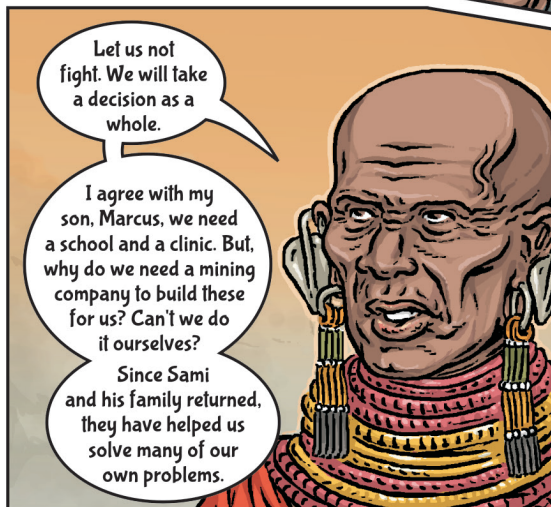
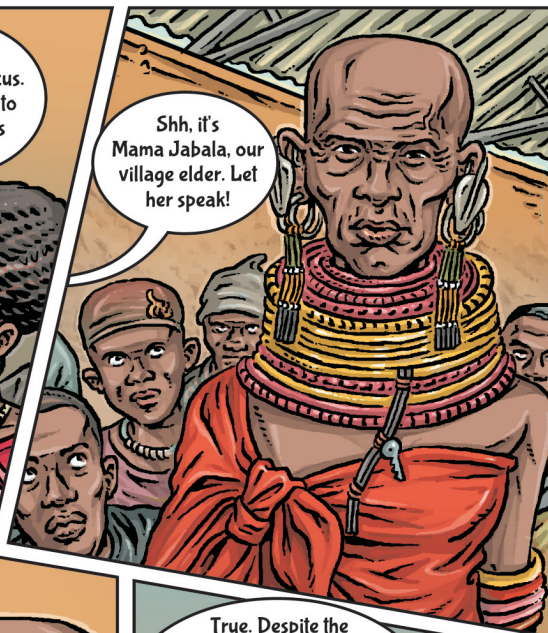
Logging, mining and corporate plantations have diminished forest cover to less than a quarter of the country's land area.



This type of economic extractive model has been used since colonial times to reorganize the world and generate profit from nature through the exploitation of local labor.

I want to bring this up at tomorrow's meeting – because even the mining company managers may be present.





Five years later. The lithium mine.



Back in the empty village, Buntu is helping Mama Jabala grind corn.



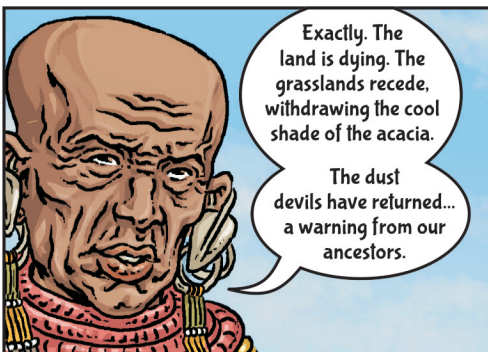
Do you hear that, Buntu?

I don't hear anything.



Exactly. The land is dying. The grasslands recede, withdrawing the cool shade of the acacia.

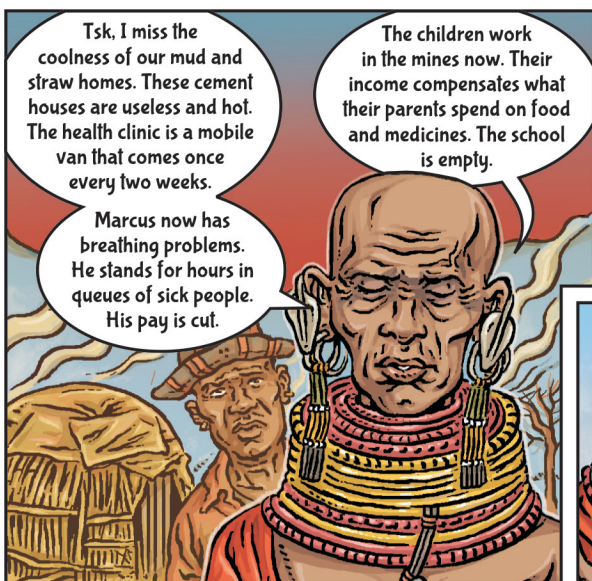
The dust devils have returned... a warning from our ancestors.



Tsk, I miss the coolness of our mud and straw homes. These cement houses are useless and hot. The health clinic is a mobile van that comes once every two weeks.

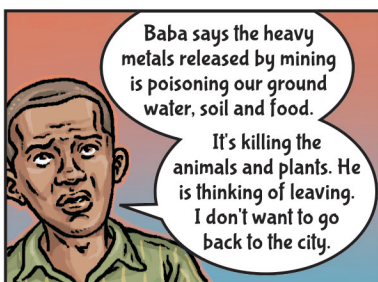
Marcus now has breathing problems. He stands for hours in queues of sick people. His pay is cut.

The children work in the mines now. Their income compensates what their parents spend on food and medicines. The school is empty.



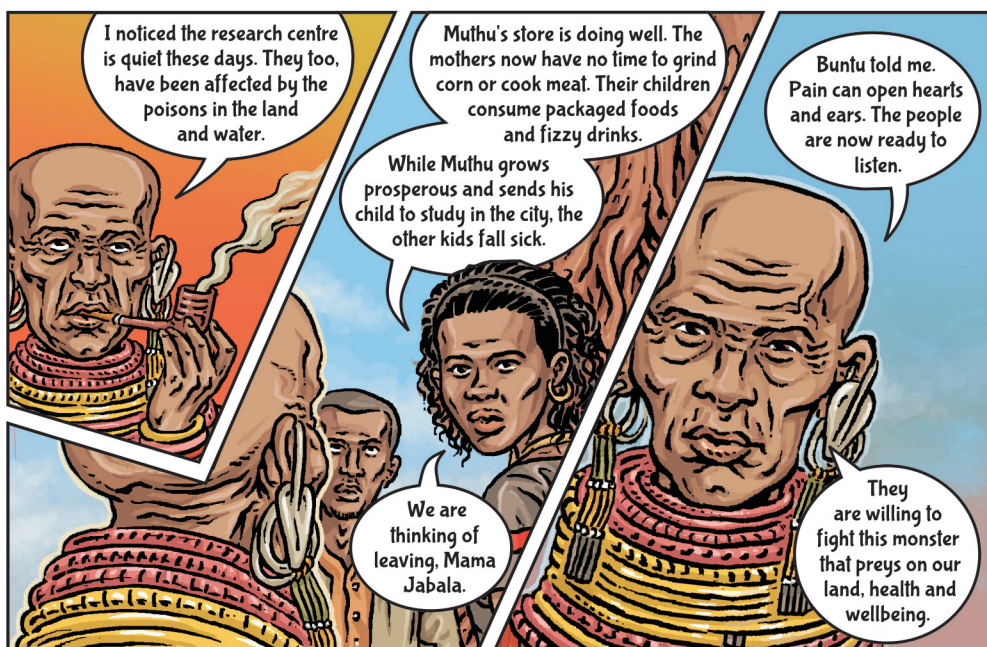
Baba says the heavy metals released by mining is poisoning our ground water, soil and food.

It's killing the animals and plants. He is thinking of leaving. I don't want to go back to the city.



I will speak with Sami and Achieng.





Extractivist projects are enforced by state and extrajudicial violence.

In the US for instance, opposition to oil pipelines has been legally equated with terrorism in some states.

Statistics show 2019 to be the worst year ever for environmental activists with 212 murders, primarily of people opposing mining, largely in Colombia, the Philippines, Mexico and Central America.

In breaking news, an unidentified gunman shot village elder, Mama Jabala, at the Malafi Lithium Mines protest.

In anger, protestors damaged cars and equipment, before the police opened fire, injuring hundreds.

This comes at a time when the villagers had joined in solidarity to protect their land, water and resources from what they describe as unscrupulous and exploitative mining activities.

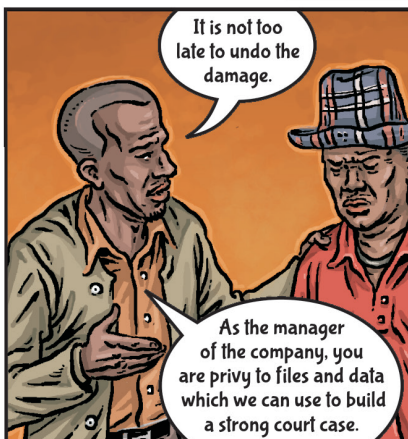


As they lower the body of Mama Jabala, wrapped in a red stained animal skin, a symbol of the return of her blood to the land, the dust devils swirl wildly in the near distance.

The people look at these messengers of the dead, and wonder how the dust twists on a still, windless evening.



I cannot sleep. My mother's grieving eyes stare at me, asking why? I don't have an answer. Tell me, what can I do to appease our ancestors?



Marcus joins his people in the movement against mining in their region, helping to expose the environmental crimes committed by the company. After two years of determined struggle, finally the Supreme Court passes a stay order on all mining activity.



The dust devils ceased. The people worked the land to rehabilitate the soil, decontaminate and recharge the groundwater.



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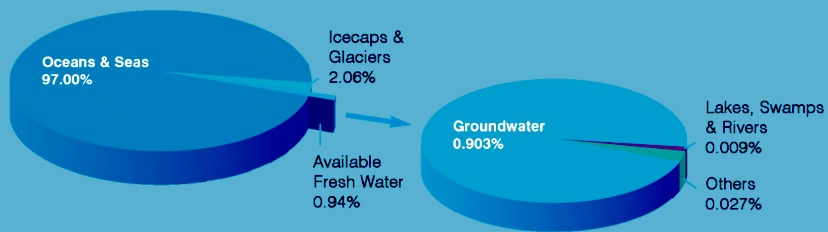
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In the arid landscapes of East Africa, Sami, a young man returns to his village with his family and a degree in water research. With his wife, Achieng, they share a vision of progress that respects tradition and nurtures the land.

One day, his son Buntu overhears one of the young village men, Marcus, discuss plans with the managers of a mining company. Sami soon discovers that his aspirations clash with the allure of promises of the mining company, leading his people down a path of exploitation and environmental devastation.

As pollution seeps into the groundwater and sickness plagues the community, Sami and his fellow villagers face a grim reality – either reclaim their land and health together, or succumb to despair and exploitation.

About the Series Editors

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