

# spotlight

2021 **Issue 1**



Illustration credit: Amira Arshad

## A roadmap to making Big Polluters pay

Strengthening the climate justice movement with a tool for liability

**“We’re advancing climate justice by reining in obstructive corporate power and making sure that Big Polluters pay for their deception.”**

SRIRAM MADHUSOODANAN | U.S. CLIMATE  
CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR

### Take action!

Demand your elected officials  
hold Big Polluters liable:  
[MakeBigPollutersPay.org/ACT](https://MakeBigPollutersPay.org/ACT)

Since the launch of the Global Call to Make Big Polluters Pay in 2019, the movement for industry liability has only gained momentum.

And after months of powerful organizing alongside some of our closest climate justice allies from around the world, together we launched the Liability Roadmap—a tool with the detailed guidance and recommendations decision-makers need to hold Big Polluters liable for the damage they knowingly cause to people and the planet.

People everywhere are ready to take action. In 2020 alone, public officials in New Jersey, South Carolina, Delaware, Minnesota, Hawaii, and Washington, D.C. launched climate-related lawsuits

against Big Polluters. And across the world, communities in Nigeria, Vanuatu, Mexico, Portugal, India, and others are demanding accountability.

Holding Big Polluters accountable for the damage they cause is essential to advancing climate justice globally, and to unlocking the resources we need to implement real solutions to address the climate crisis. That’s why we’re taking our campaign to the next stage by organizing with members like you to move mayors, state attorneys general, and other public officials in the U.S. to make Big Polluters pay.

The Liability Roadmap is a powerful step-by-step tool to help change the course of climate policy. Contact your elected officials and make sure they see—and use—the roadmap today.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Challenging corporate power key to securing progressive wins

Dear friend,

On January 20, I watched the ceremony that finally marked the peaceful transfer of power with many emotions. I felt relief at the lack of violence; I felt anger and grief about the violence committed by white nationalists spurred by the rhetoric of the former president just two weeks before.

I was also joyful, knowing that this moment was made possible by the brilliant organizing led by Black women, Indigenous communities, and other organizers and voters of color. Most of all, I felt a flame of hope burning steadily, fueled by a renewed commitment to the work ahead.

Our democracy still stands but is badly battered. And corporate greed is in large part to blame for its shredded state.

Corporations and their execs have spent vast sums of money to put complicit lawmakers in office. And for decades, these mostly white men have worked to dismantle government, hindering its ability to care for and protect all people. For these reasons and more, corporations are at the root of and have profited from some of the most serious issues we face today.

To fully tackle issues of structural racism, climate crisis, wealth inequality, public health crisis, and more, we must take on corporate power through strategic, global campaigns. I'm proud to say that Corporate Accountability, in deep partnership with members like you and our allies around the world, are ready for this moment. We are laser-focused on our role in creating a different kind of future: shifting power away from corporations and back to people.

Together, we can build a world of justice and equity for all, with no exceptions. I'm honored to be doing this work with you in these times, and I'm grateful to count you as part of our community dedicated to creating a better future for all.



Onward,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Patti Lynn".

**Patti Lynn**  
Executive Director

## Exposing Big Tobacco's backdoor tactics

You are bringing the industry's deceptive practices to light

**"We're keeping Big Tobacco's abuses in the spotlight to protect lifesaving public health policies around the world."**

MICHÉL LEGENDRE | ASSOCIATE CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR

Over the last few months, we've played an important role in the development of the Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index, a report focusing on countering industry interference and encouraging further implementation of the global tobacco treaty.

Members of our team not only led specific research in several countries, but they also led the coordination of the index's publication in Latin America, culminating in a webinar with hundreds of participants from around the world and prominent panelists such as the head of the global tobacco control body and the former president of Uruguay.

With some of the strongest tobacco control policies in the world, there has been no shortage of attempts by Big Tobacco to weaken regulations in Latin America. The index will be a powerful tool for holding governments accountable when it comes to countering industry interference in implementing and advancing lifesaving public health measures worldwide.

And with your ongoing support, we'll continue working closely with global tobacco control allies to monitor Big Tobacco's abuses.

# Q&A

## Member spotlight: Michael Gottwald

Michael Gottwald is a film producer who previously worked on Barack Obama's presidential campaigns and who currently lives in New Orleans.



### What aspects of Corporate Accountability's work do you feel are most important and why?

I strongly believe that changing corporate practices is important—and to be effective in getting corporations to notice demands from people sometimes means beating them at their own game. The idea of utilizing individual shareholders of corporations to organize around human rights, labor rights, and environmental rights issues is a smart, exciting, and subversive way to achieve change.

### You're based in the Gulf South. How have you seen corporate impunity manifest in your community?

The Gulf South is at the forefront of how a lack of corporate accountability is exacerbating inequalities and disparities among the people who live here. For years, corporations in the Gulf South have operated with impunity, wreaking havoc on many communities whether it's skyrocketing cancer rates or being battered by hurricane after hurricane. And because of that, people can no longer afford to wait for a big disaster to happen to be able to finally address all of the pollution and corruption that's happening. We need to proactively address issues of corporate abuse before we get sick or die.

### How does our mission align with your values?

Nobody or no entity should have free rein to do whatever they want to do in our society. That's why it's so important to keep corporations in check. Ideally, this responsibility would fall on governments, but we've seen how, through vast amounts of spending and lobbying, corporations are able to buy their way into influencing policies and governance processes. So if governments can't hold corporations accountable for causing harm, it falls on people—whether at the grassroots level or within the tent of the shareholders—to do so, so that we can protect ourselves from all this unmitigated power.

## "Subverting" and "biting back" against corporate power together

How you can stay connected with our work

### "We're exposing the predatory nature of unchecked corporate power not only in the U.S., but also worldwide."

JOHN STEWART | DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

We're excited to announce the release of two new projects that have been in the works for some time!

First, our food campaign is featured in *Bite Back*, a book of essays by food justice organizers from across the United States. Written by President Emeritus Kelle Louaillier and close ally

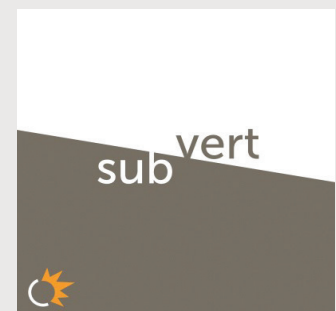
Anna Lappé, our chapter provides a history of our food campaign, including our victories in challenging Big Food over the last several years.

We also launched a podcast, *Subvert*, that features stories of movements challenging corporate abuse worldwide. You'll get to hear from our own organizers and from our close allies both in the U.S. and abroad—providing you with even more opportunities to stay connected with our work.

With your support, we're exposing the predatory nature of abusive corporations to millions of people. Pick up a copy of *Bite Back* or listen to *Subvert* to learn more about the impact you're making today.

### Learn more!

Listen to the Subvert podcast:  
[CorporateAccountability.org/Subvert](https://CorporateAccountability.org/Subvert)



Pick up a copy of *Bite Back*:  
[CorporateAccountability.org/BiteBack](https://CorporateAccountability.org/BiteBack)



# Solidarity with the people of Nigeria

How you stepped up to show international solidarity with our global allies



Activists from Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA) at a November 2020 press conference demanding justice for the victims of the Lekki Massacre in Lagos. Photo credit: CAPPA

**“Challenging corporate power and defending democracy are intrinsically linked. That’s why we must rise up together, from Washington to Lagos.”**

LAUREN DERUSHA | CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR

For years, young Nigerians have suffered brutal force, arbitrary arrests, and extrajudicial killings at the hands of SARS, a feared covert police unit. But rather than heeding the demands of the grassroots #EndSARS movement, the Nigerian government responded by unleashing lethal military force on peaceful protesters in Lagos, killing and maiming citizens instead.

So, when the people of Nigeria called for international solidarity, we moved quickly to support our close allies at Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA), a leading grassroots organization based in Lagos.

For more than 20 years, we’ve organized alongside CAPPA’s fearless activists. They’re risking their own safety daily to support this movement against state brutality—including by generating international solidarity for justice for victims. And thanks to the swift support

of members like you, we successfully mobilized over 10,000 people and hundreds of organizations to support calls for an international inquiry into last October’s Lekki Toll Gate massacre.

Our struggles and movements are interconnected. The youth-led protests in Nigeria mirror the uprisings in defense of Black lives happening in the United States and worldwide. People everywhere are demanding an end to police brutality and to defend democracy, and calling for justice. And keeping a global spotlight on the #EndSARS movement will be critical as the Nigerian government decides its next steps.

## Take action!

Sign the petition of international solidarity: [CorporateAccountability.org/EndSARS](https://CorporateAccountability.org/EndSARS)

## Make a monthly gift

Sustain this work to protect human rights, people’s lives, and the planet.

**Contact** Adwoa Addae, senior membership manager, at 617.695.2525 or [info@CorporateAccountability.org](mailto:info@CorporateAccountability.org)

**Visit** our website at [CorporateAccountability.org/MonthlyGift](https://CorporateAccountability.org/MonthlyGift)

**Send** in the enclosed envelope.

## Why monthly giving?

Your gift works faster and more efficiently to make a bigger impact.

You receive insider campaign updates to keep up to date on the influential role you have in creating a more just and equitable world.

It’s easy to participate, and you help save resources and expenses.

**Thank you for your partnership!**



**“I am passionate about supporting Corporate Accountability because safe water is a right, not a privilege, that everyone must have! And by joining forces with other activists, their efforts make a difference not only in our country, but also worldwide.”**

GINNY SHALLER | MONTHLY DONOR



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