UEPodcast Episode Three: Boston's Commons, Reclaimed

(KC): Hi, I'm Kaili Chen,

(CB): And I'm Celia Bottger, and we are two recent graduates of Tufts University who studied international relations, environmental studies, and biology. Last spring, we took Professor Agyeman's class at the UEP called Developing Sustainable Communities, where we learned the importance of centering social justice in sustainability and urban planning practices. Throughout the class, we learned how sustainability initiatives in the past have excluded issues of equity and justice, and how Professor Agyeman's just sustainabilities approach can remedy past injustices while promoting sustainable development in urban communities. The class underscored how crucial it is to center communities in policy-making processes, especially when those communities have been marginalized by past urban planning policies.

(CB): As two recent graduates of Tufts, Boston is our home away from home and thus the contextual background for this podcast. In this podcast mini-series, we will first explore the history of racial inequity in Boston, and how urban planning policies have reinforced racial segregation in Boston's neighborhoods. We then turn to community leaders working in some of Boston's historically-marginalized neighborhoods, and learn how they are building resilience and empowering their residents to address Boston's racial inequities from the ground up.

(KC): In this episode, we begin with a discussion on food justice in Dorchester with the Dorchester Food Co-Op. Then, we hear about the importance of youth empowerment and environmental justice advocacy in Roxbury with Alternatives for Community and Environment.

(KC): As we discussed in our last episode, urban planning can be a means to enforce racial and wealth inequities, or a "toolkit of white supremacy," as Professor Agyeman stated. The insidious aspect of urban planning policies is that they may appear to be harmless or even beneficial on paper. However, as we have seen with single-family zoning, redlining, and gentrification, many of these practices are "racism by the backdoor." They are only beneficial to *some*, namely White, wealthy residents, but continue to disenfranchise POC and low-income communities.

(CB): In 2010, Mayor Menino announced zoning changes in Mattapan and established an Urban Agriculture Overlay District. Use of the land would be limited to the cultivation of plants and composting. While this promotion of urban agriculture may have seemed beneficial to low-income communities by providing locally-grown food, this policy was met with resistance by residents because it was not in line with the community's desires. Professor Agyeman expands more on this conflict.

(JA): More recently, under the mayorship of Mayor Menino, there was a case where a very good idea, rezoning for urban agriculture, was literally dumped on the Dorchester/Mattapan doorstep and the mayor decided that he wanted urban farms in these neighborhoods because of there being food deserts and food insecurity. And yet, nobody thought about really doing the consultation work and the work that is needed with communities to get new ideas accepted. And it took a long time before the community and what was then the Boston Redevelopment Authority actually managed to come to an agreement as to what it would be. So a seemingly good policy, you know, urban agriculture, was handled in a way that might seem, to some, racist. Why did the mayor not want the urban agriculture programs in other parts of the city? Why go to the poorest part of the city first? Again, we can speculate, but it does seem to me that a lot of new ideas are often put in lower-income neighborhoods. And these are precisely the neighborhoods that have been disinvested, redlined, have had dubious policing tactics so people don't trust the government. Trust is something that takes a while to build, and we need our government to be representative of the people and to consult fully in, in many ways, to co-produce answers for local neighborhoods.

(KC): The City of Boston failed in 2010 to co-produce its solution of urban agriculture with the Mattapan community, leading to resistance and mistrust. In order to foster trust, we need representation in government at all levels.

(JA): One of my old bugbears is does your organization look like the community it's serving? And, you know, we have a real problem there that's certainly at the senior management level, but lower down the chain as well. Many local governments do not look like the communities that they are serving. And I'm not saying that there is no effort in this respect. I understand that the mayor has made some genuine strides to try and improve the way that the city looks in terms of who is employed and who isn't. I think we need both, a change in attitude of local governments: that they are not there to provide, they are there to listen and co-produce solutions. And I think that will be enabled by city council workers that look more like the communities that they are serving.

(JA): Now, I understand that there's a residency requirement for many jobs. That's a good thing. When we look at Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Police, we learn that 94% do not live in the city of Minneapolis; they live in the suburbs. That's a problem. We need, especially law enforcement, to look more like communities and I think Boston has made some strides in doing that. But again, I think it's this recognition of the need to co-produce ideas and solutions locally. And that can only come through a much greater attempt at ensuring that local people have employment prospects within cities.

(KC): It is this concept of co-governance and co-production in practice that makes community-led programs like the Dorchester Food Co-op sustainable and fruitful. Set to open in 2021, the Dorchester Food Co-op is a retail grocery store dedicated to serve and reflect the diverse racial, socioeconomic and ethnic makeup of its community. Through community development and engagement, the Dorchester Food Co-op creates jobs for community residents and partners with farmers' markets, corner stores and neighborhood health centers to increase accessibility to affordable, sustainably-grown and culturally-relevant foods. The Dorchester Food Co-op is not only a grocery store, but also a space for residents and members to create a vibrant and dynamic ecosystem representative of its constituents.

(CB): In a study conducted by the Massachusetts Food Trust, 2.8 million people in Massachusetts live in food deserts, or around 40% of the state population. Food deserts are defined by the USDA as low-income census tracts with limited access to grocery stores and supermarkets. In urban areas, this looks like neighborhoods with an abundance of corner stores but a lack of full-service grocery stores. As a Boston Globe article describes of food deserts in Springfield, "For lack of alternatives, people in...predominantly African-American neighborhoods often shop at convenience stores more likely to sell chips and cookies than spinach and cauliflower."

(CB): The Dorchester Food Co-Op directly addresses this healthy food deficit as a retail grocery store selling locally-grown, nutritious food, thus contributing to food justice in the Dorchester community. Food justice, as we learned in Professor Agyeman's class, is the ability of marginalized communities, who historically have been denied access to healthy food, to grow, sell and eat wholesome, culturally-appropriate and locally-accessible food. Moreover, the food justice movement examines how structural racism has caused these disparities, and works towards racial and economic justice.

(CB): We spoke with Liz Wang, who is working to make the Dorchester Food Co-Op a reality.

(LW): So the Dorchester Food Co-op was created in 2011 just with a group of residents seeing there was a lack of healthy food options in Dorchester. And I think just some folks who started out were also involved in the worker co-op movement in Boston, and seeing that we didn't quite have a food co-op store in the neighborhood of Dorchester.

(LW): It's important for local-based residents and folks to create their own solutions. So starting out it might have been just a conversation of healthy food. And it's hard to kind of see what the momentum of food co-ops nation-wide are because there is a very rich history of Black and Brown and Indigenous-led co-ops doing it out of survival, doing it out of community. But then there's also this stereotype and this visibility of white-only co-ops and co-ops being only stores

for people who can afford it, for organic produce... just higher end...definitely pointed towards the food desert of Dorchester.

(KC): Recognizing that there has been an increasing trend of co-ops that are exclusive or pose barriers of entry, how is the Dorchester Food Co-op addressing accessibility and how is it representative of the community and membership?

(LW): I think what is so crucial is to always be asking the question of who are we reaching? Is this enough? And who is this for? Any organization that says that you are serving people, right, you need to have that at the forefront. Having representation in the input then puts out representation and inclusive programming. And I think getting that input early on is really important in making the programs of partnerships very genuine.

(LW): You need a store, or an organization, or a project to represent folks because otherwise who's making the solution? Who is saying that this is what Dorchester needs when it doesn't actually represent everyone in Dorchester? We need representation in our government, in the places we go to, in our schools, to feel comfortable, to feel like we belong, and get this investment in the project, but also understanding that this investment in the project is an investment in yourself.

(CB): In addition to reflecting the diverse makeup of the Dorchester community, the Dorchester Food Co-Op also aims to keep money and jobs local so that the community can continue to reap the benefits of the store’s success.

(CB): To do so, the Co-Op collaborates with local farmers to ensure that they are adequately compensated for the food they provide. Liz explains more about how the Co-Op supports these local supply chains that ensure sustainability, ethical labor practices, and moreover increase local wealth.

(LW): A lot of folks in Dorchester are into growing and urban farming. We're quite lucky to have local urban farms within the vicinity with similar missions. And what I love about collaborating with them is supporting them, particularly farmers, and people working in the food industry and in the production who historically have not really been compensated well or appreciated. Their work is so important for providing the food, and they're already doing work and applying to grants to make their food affordable. The co-op is not creating a solution; it's all about collaboration. And through that collaboration, able to sustain our local workers, able to support those supply chains to make the food accessible and make sure the food is going to who it needs to be going to. And I think that just goes into like the greater conversation of creating good jobs, keeping the money local.

(KC): Absolutely. Positioning our dollars to keep money in the community is crucial in bolstering local resilience and maintaining economic velocity. How can we best support and promote the Dorchester Food Co-Op?

(LW): So how to best promote would be to just spread the word. The easiest way is to join as a member-owner. Following the project, learning more about it, finding the way that you are reflected in it, and can own the co-op before joining...also welcome.

(LW): And so we actually hit 852 members today, which is amazing. Most co-ops need 1,000 members by store opening to show the community, investors, banks, lenders, that we do have buy-in and we will be financially feasible. It is crucial that we stay open, we supply jobs, we support our vendors. So membership is quite important. And I think just even giving time, you know, whether you're giving time by sharing the word so that the outreach team does less, or even joining the outreach team, that's very important because it's a project that's done by everybody and not by a centralized group of folks.

(CB): While the Dorchester Food Co-op continues to promote a food solidarity economy through its network approach, next door in Roxbury, Alternatives for Community and Environment, or ACE, uses community organizing to secure transit justice, environmental justice, and racial justice for the community it serves.

(CB): At ACE, Roxbury residents and community organizers build platforms and offer resources that address systemic racism on a statewide and national level. As the first environmental justice nonprofit organization in Massachusetts, ACE has worked to leverage the power of communities of color and low-income communities for the past 25 years to eradicate environmental racism and classism.

(KC): David Noiles joins us to talk more about his experiences working with ACE. As the director of the Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Program, or REEP, David guides youth-led, adult-supported, environmental justice and racial justice campaigns. At its forefront, REEP advocates for police reform, food sovereignty, and transit justice.

DN: We have REEP, Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Project, which I am the director of ever since last year, September 12th, to be exact. And we're the youth portion of this adult organization. There's nothing separate in between campaign work really, except for the fact that the young people are not lawyers, and I'm not a lawyer, so we don't technically do the law stuff. But we do a very grassroots approach and youth approach to the campaigns and plus have our own campaigns as well.

DN: I was once a REEPer. I was a young person in this program 20 years ago. And this organization literally saved my life. The adults provide resources, they provide trainings, but they also get out the way and let young people exist and be free in themselves. There's two E's in REEP: there's Environment, but there's also Empowerment. So it actually gives young people the tools to not just fight the oppressors, but it actually dismantles the oppression that's already inside them. Through the toxic learning, capitalistic learning that we go through in this country, a lot of the young people come in, they're black and brown, young people that don't come in believing in themselves. When they come into these walls and they've stepped through this door, it's almost a transformation from the first day they come into the last day of them just being themselves and finding out who they are as a person, finally having a space for them to be that person that they always wanted to be. In that sense, they're fighting for their community.

(DN): A lot of misconceptions about REEP is that everybody comes from the same neighborhood of Roxbury and Dudley. Our young people are from Dorchester, Mattapan, Egleston, JP, Hyde Park, wherever. And one of our very first victories was in Orchard Park, getting rid of an asbestos pile. And none of our young people at the time were from that neighborhood. In fact, it was very rare to be me coming from the place where I'm from, and the other young people coming, especially the young men coming from where they're from, they would never really be in that area because of their own safety. Yet they went into different housing projects and went into different community meetings to help get this asbestos pile rid of. And it goes to show you the importance of this organization because we cross boundaries, we cross lines, and we take on our own bravery, just for the betterment of our community. Because if there's an injustice somewhere, there's injustice everywhere. And the REEP young people and myself try to live by that motto.

(CB): How do you feel REEP is unique or different from other youth development programs?

(DN): I wouldn't say that there's anything too unique about this youth space, other than the fact that they're not that many youth spaces left. There's not a lot of youth organizing and not just environmental justice, but just youth organizations left in Boston, period. So having a place still, where young people feel comfortable and come in, be themselves, party, joke, celebrate birthdays, celebrate graduations, ask for resources, ask for help, have a community of folks for people that just come in.

(DN): When I was growing up, we had Project Hip Hop, BYOP, Green Shirts, Red Shirts. There was summer employment and there were programs rampant throughout the city of Boston when I was growing up. And because of the lack of funding that it's getting--whether it's from the city, or from private organizations that don't put that same emphasis in youth empowerment--we're

unique now because we're the only ones that's been standing ever since the 90s and still continues on. So I'm proud of that fact. But it's also a scary burden to lift.

(CB): When Kaili and I looked into this, we found that between 2000-2016, the teen employment to population ratio in Massachusetts declined by 37%, according to a study by the Boston Indicators Project. In Greater Boston, youth of color are more likely to face employment challenges: in 2014, Black, Asian and Latino teen populations had unemployment rates above 24%, while the white teen unemployment rate was 13.2%.

(CB): Youth who are neither employed nor in school-- sometimes referred to as "disconnected youth"-- are known to be at the greatest risk for long-term poverty, incarceration, or substance abuse. In the Greater Boston Area, Black and Latino youth are more than three times more likely to fall into this category than their White or Asian counterparts.

(CB): Having learned this, we asked David to expand more on the specific injustices the youth he works with face.

(DN): It's very shameful that we're dealing with a lot of injustices that not even the youth from when I was a young person, right, that my parents have faced, and my grandparents have faced: police brutality, gentrification, a lack of education... and in these certain communities, one school getting more stuff than the other. Just always going through a lack of resources as black and brown folks.

(DN): And so what the young people are trying to do is get resources because of this pandemic. They're fighting to get money and resources from places so that they can help provide and they can help keep their neighborhood the same. Because after this eviction moratorium is over, all the money that the young people have been working from these summer jobs, and when October and November comes and people may start looking for their rent money, that's where that money is gonna go. Even though there's some people who don't look at that as an environmental justice issue, getting kicked out of your environment is an EJ issue.

(DN): And so they're taking even environmental justice work that doesn't pay them a lot at all. They're knee deep in it because they know that they're creating change and hopefully, that that change will come in and resources for maybe not them, but for the future generations don't have to struggle. It's marvelous to see 14-,15-,16-,17-year-olds working on projects that they're not going to benefit from. And that's always been the way of youth organizing. We never really get to see the benefits of the campaigns they work on. The young people that worked on the youth with the MBTA so they can get the M7s, also known as the youth passes, they're grown now. They don't qualify for the youth pass. But when they see their younger cousin or their younger

sibling get that youth pass, they legit shed a tear, or they text me, or put on Facebook like “My cousin got a youth pass. I remember trying to get that.” They're working on a lot, but that's their main focus, is making sure that they’re providing resources so the next generation won't suffer, especially around this Green New Deal stuff.

(KC): After facing years of protests, the MBTA began its youth pass program in the summer of 2015. Offering reduced fares for commuters between the ages of 12 and 21 years old, the program saw a 30% increase of young T and bus riders. Through the collaborative efforts of ACE and the Youth Affordabili(T) Coalition, young activists have secured increased access to transportation and opportunities for generations to come. Today, they continue to fight for future generations, ensuring that their families do not become climate refugees due to sea level rise.

(DN): Because we living in Boston. Because we definitely live on trash. A lot of people may not know that about Boston, like, we live on a landfill. Climate change is really scary for people that can't move and have to stay in Roxbury, they have to stay in Dorchester, don't have enough money to move just in case the sea level rises or something like that. If you make minimum wage, what are you going to do? And if a young person sees that, they're thinking I have to do everything that I can. So that puts an extra burden on the young person to be like, I don't want my children, or I don't want my mother having to buy a canoe because that's the only option that we got.

(CB): In fact, the pace of sea level rise in Boston due to climate change is expected to triple by 2030, increasing by around eight inches from 2000 levels. While Mayor Walsh has pledged to spend 30 million dollars to defend Boston from coastal flooding, it is crucial that more vulnerable locations receive appropriate protection and investments.

(CB): Boston’s low-income neighborhoods, such as Dorchester, are particularly vulnerable to sea level rise because, as David pointed out, they are built on low-lying landfill. By the end of the century, a large part of the Dorchester neighborhood could be underwater.

(CB): David discussed how he has seen the trajectory of the youth movement change in the years he has been a part of REEP in response to the climate crisis and police violence.

(DN): When I was a young person, I would never have thought about getting arrested, or doing a sit-in at the transportation building. That's how people got their youth passes. It was maybe 20 people, including young people between the ages of 15 to, like, 18, who sat down at the transportation office and got arrested [21 were arrested]. It’s the same young people that I taught a year and a half before, and me, I couldn’t do it. But the younger generation was like, “Oh, I got

this," and just sat down and was just waiting to get arrested. I never thought I would see it either. I would never have thought in a million years.

(DN): Getting arrested means something. It means lack of resources, it means they may not be able to get a scholarship. It means like all of these things, and they're young people just like, "uh uh, fam. I'm here for the cause. I'm here for the movement. I am the movement". And this is not after "Oh, I saw what happened to George Floyd, I saw what happened to Mike Brown." It wasn't because of that, it's because they were already in the space of activism and learning. So it's not about being trendy or following like, I should do it because I've seen somebody else do it. It was because this is the movement that moved them. That's the trajectory that I never thought I would see.

(KC): It's really incredible to hear how ACE commits to its community, and especially to young people. How can the greater Boston community support REEP and ACE to ensure that these programs continue?

(DN): Well, if you have funds and resources, give it to the organizations, and I'm not trying to diss, like, the ACLU or anything like that, but start doing research on these local organizations. And stop giving out to the bigs. Because it's not the same trickle down effect that you hoped that it would have, versus giving it to a community organization that's just doing gentrification and housing work. The funds are drying up all over this, not even just the city, but over the country around this stuff.

(DN): So it's people meaning adults, our peers, everyone, needing to take that extra step and do that research, figuring out if you want to be part of the Black Lives Matter movement or Defund the Boston Police, or making sure teachers get educated, whatever campaign that you're a part of, go to the source and talk to those people. And it's not about taking credit from somebody else, you're just doing more harm to the actual movement than good. It may not be from a malice place, but malice can still follow from that. It's really hard because that means you have to admit that you don't know something. But at REEP, like we like to say, "I don't know" is a perfectly good answer, because all it means is that you just don't know yet. And the answer is soon to come.

(CB): Hoping to learn more about ACE's fight for environmental justice, we spoke with Hajar Logan, ACE's Climate and Transit-Oriented Development Director. She emphasized the importance of transit justice for low-income residents who rely on public transportation for their livelihoods.

(KC): In urban settings, people of color take public transit at a rate 50% higher than white residents. And, workers classified as essential account for 36% of total transit commuters in the United States. However, as the pandemic has made abundantly clear, the lack of policies ensuring transit justice have made essential workers feel expendable.

(KC): Investing in public transportation is an investment in communities of color. As Jarred Johnson, Executive Director of Transit Matters, says, "We need to honor those workers that we've been clapping for and waving signs for. What would be a disgrace is for us to go back to terrible traffic because we're not investing in public transit". The demands of Bostonians are clear: the Massachusetts State Senate must invest in public transport.

(CB): Hajar shares more on what transit justice looks like in Boston and the projects ACE initiated to secure and protect the liberties and safety of Boston residents.

(HL): For a lot of people who live in lower-income communities, they rely on public transportation, except where public transportation is not safe. And in Boston, we have an issue with our public transportation being not reliable and not safe for a myriad of reasons. There is a criminal justice issue with policing, and while there's been a lot of work that the police have done to build relationships with the community, there are segments of the community that have not been well reached. And there is a criminal justice issue in terms of the crime that surrounds poverty and destitution. And so those impact the public transit system in Boston's inner city pretty significantly.

(HL): Transit justice issues start there. They also have a lot to do with the T's reliability. The T has started raising fares beyond just means. Which means that a round trip ticket to the city, which is really a 20 to 30 minute ride is almost $10 now, and somebody who needs to rely on the train, that means you're spending about $50 a week on the train which then makes it more expensive than a car.

(HL): We are working on a bunch of transit campaigns. We're also working on an anti-gentrification campaign. We work with and against the Boston Planning and Development Agency. The demands relate directly to the amount of people they're displacing in their committed effort to make the inner cities more mixed-income. That's what they would say.

(KC): From the changing faces of Roxbury and Dorchester, we witness what the numbers have indicated. In 2017, the median housing prices for Boston increased 4.3% while housing prices in Roxbury increased by 34.2%. Pernicious and predatory real estate development continues to displace long-standing residents who are unable to afford market rate rent. Even at Tufts, we see

how off-campus student housing is displacing Medford and Somerville residents and inflating average rents.

(KC): Organizations like ACE persist in their fight for rent-stabilization, new affordable housing, and anti-displacement zones through anti-gentrification campaigns. In doing so, these neighborhoods can avoid the fate of super-appreciated housing and displacement experienced in Boston's South End, for example.

(HL): So the anti-gentrification campaign is directed at the Boston Planning and Development Agency because what they do is they build houses for people who don't live in the neighborhood. They're building apartment buildings for people who don't live in the neighborhood. And they are driving up the value of land and property in the neighborhood, in addition to tax value. So that now, in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, you cannot rent an apartment if you have an income less than $60,000. This is a direct result of building for people who earn $75,000 in a low income community. At first they were building property for market value, zero to one bedrooms, even in communities whose family sizes are roughly four people. But the BPDA is building housing units for family sizes of one to two people. So they are disproportionately displacing families as well.

(CB): While gentrification is displacing low-income residents from their neighborhoods, air pollution from traffic congestion is disproportionately affecting the health of those very same residents. Hajar speaks to another urban planning tool called "livable streets," which on its face aims to greenify streets and reduce air pollution, but in reality is placing low-income and POC residents in harm's way. Professor Agyeman discussed livable streets as a tool for sustainable neighborhood development in our class, but as Hajar points out, community engagement is crucial to ensuring justice at every stage and not just the last.

(HL): Livable streets is not shrinking the amount of cars going through the city--it might eventually shrink the amount of cars going through the city, that's the plan--but in the meantime, what it's doing is narrowing the streets, creating more traffic congestion and exposing the people who live in the city every day, day and night, to a heightened level of air pollution that is generated from vehicle exhaust. And air pollution that is generated from vehicle exhaust happens to be a public health hazard.

(HL): When you see a "Black Lives Matter" protest in the street, and they're protesting criminal brutality --and they needed to protest that 20 years ago-- 'cause, let's face it, what was the war on drugs really about but locking up Black and brown people, putting guns on the streets and creating warfare between Black and brown men, boys, teenagers. That's what it was about. So, that's a very important thing. And in the meantime, we're in a pandemic, that's killing black and

brown people disproportionately because we have been breathing vehicle exhaust at extreme levels for a very long time.

(KC): A recent analysis conducted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council found that 29% of White Bostonians live in areas with high Pollution Proximity Index, a measure of distance to highly trafficked areas. In comparison, 45% of Black residents, 47% of Asian residents, and 54% of Latino residents do, confirming Hajar's assertion.

(KC): Increased exposure to air pollution exacerbates conditions such as asthma, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. And as the pandemic unfolds, it is becoming more and more clear that long-term exposure to air pollution increases the risk of dying from COVID-19. A Harvard study found that a long-term resident of a neighborhood with high levels of particulate matter would be 8% more likely to die of COVID than someone who lived in a neighborhood with just one unit less of air pollution.

(KC): To address this blatant environmental injustice, ACE also advocates for more green buildings to enhance the air quality in Boston.

(HL): The third demand that we have is LEED certification. We ask them to build property that is LEED Platinum to pass house standard. Because when they are ventilating and purifying the air, we will then be able to put people in places where their air quality is no longer a public health hazard.

(CB): Through their numerous campaigns, ACE builds power in the communities they serve to address environmental and racial injustice.

(HL): We build community amongst multiple spectrums including neighborhood associations, advocates and advocacy, organizing, we do grassroots organizing. And not organizing advocates, organizing neighbors and neighborhoods. And then we connect this work with climate, and housing, and transit-oriented development, transit justice. This work is connected to a commitment to building resilience and equity, racial justice equality... that kind of work.

(CB): In this episode, we learned how even well-meaning urban planning policies, such as zoning for urban agriculture and livable streets, can reinforce the social inequities they aim to address. As our interviewees emphasized, it is only through empowering local residents, building meaningful representation in organizations and in government, and co-producing solutions with communities themselves that cities can rebuild inclusive, sustainable, and equitable neighborhoods to remedy the injustices of the past.

(JA): Successively since colonization, and specially since the end of slavery, wealth has been transferred, grabbed, taken from Black Americans. We have a situation in Boston now, where I think the net worth of the average Black, non-Caribbean American is about $8. And for a white family, it's about $270,000 or something like that. [(KC) According to the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston, Black Americans have a median net worth of $8, compared to white city dwellers, who have an average net worth of $247,500]. This isn't just and this is immoral. There needs to be the ability to build wealth by Black families. And that could be individual wealth, or it could be more about common wealth, if you like. I'm not looking at separatism here, but I'm looking at how we can in the, you know, short-to-medium-term try and bridge the racial wealth gap that is real and is even increasing in the Boston area as it gets more expensive.

(JA): One of the problems I think that we've had in the past is that we've always attended to the economic, the environmental, the technical questions, and hoped that increased social justice would happen. Whereas what we realize now is we must center social justice. You don't get to social justice, you start with social justice in imagining your policies and plans. And at UEP, I think we do a better job than most at really alerting budding urban planners to the fact that the toolkit that they are holding can be a toolkit to bolster white supremacy, but it can also be a toolkit that can question and right some of the wrongs of the past.

(KC): Throughout the podcast, we are reminded of ways that we can support the efforts of these Boston-based organizations advocating for justice. David urges listeners to commit to research: research the organizations we donate to and the leadership behind the protests and movements we participate in, whether on social media or in person. Liz asks us to invest in the organizations whose work we support. Because when the work is reflective of its community, we all have an investment in its outcome. Hajar reminds us of the power in numbers. And that, while the journey is long, collaborative grassroots organizing can save lives.

(KC): We will be posting links to each organization's website and social media accounts on the Practical Visionaries blog, where you can learn more and support their work. We will also be posting a transcript of this podcast.

(CB): Thank you for listening to this podcast mini-series.

We would like to thank all of our guests on this podcast series who took time to speak with us:

- Jose Barros of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
- Liz Wang of the Dorchester Food Co-Op
- David Noiles of Alternatives for Community and Environment
- And Hajar Logan of Alternatives for Community and Environment

(CB): We would also like to thank Professor Agyeman for giving us the opportunity to work on this podcast, and Lily Linke for her invaluable guidance on creating this podcast.

Music - Blue Dot Sessions
When in the West
Sand Reverie
Our Only Lark
Coulis Coulis
Li Fonte