



Annual Report 2016

Phase 1 pilot program

We started the year with a Memorandum of Understanding in place with the *Permaculture Research Institute, Kenya* ([PRI-Kenya](#)), to run the first phase of a pilot of the permEzone program in collaboration with the *Drylands Natural Resources Center* ([DNRC](#)) in Makueni, Kenya. The original intention was to have funding and preparations completed in time to commence the first training early 2016.

We started the year with a strong focus on fundraising, but it took much longer than anticipated to raise the funds needed to initiate the pilot. We finally reached our funding target in July, thanks to UK-based non-profit [Garden Africa](#) who pledged matching funds of £10,000 to PRI-Kenya for the permEzone project, making the combined total of funds available sufficient to cover PRI-Kenya's entire budget for the two-year pilot with DNRC.

Unfortunately, more delays then followed when PRI-Kenya's Director resigned for personal reasons. This was a particular blow, as Elin had been a significant force in shaping and formalizing our joint venture. Further complications followed when serious financial and governance issues came to light at PRI-Kenya, and all parties agreed to put plans for the pilot on hold to allow time for new financial and management systems to be put in place.

All of this meant that we ended the year in anticipation of finally getting the pilot started in the spring of 2017.

Permaculture Association (Britain)

The [Permaculture Association](#) (Britain) adopted permEzone as an approved project in March. This opened the door for collaboration over the development of new resources for the extension of permaculture around the world, and means that UK donors can make tax-efficient gifts to permEzone as one of the Association's international projects.

Spreading the Word

Hugh attended the Permaculture Voices Conference in San Diego, and made a short presentation in the main auditorium to explain the Theory of Change underlying the permEzone program. This presentation is now available [online](#).

permEzone was featured in the News section of the new [Permaculture Magazine North America](#) in August.

At the end of the year, the magazine also published [The Slow Development Movement](#) online, an article explaining the ideas that underpin the permEzone program.

Governance

A new [Project Board](#) was formed in April, with two founding members: **Sabre Mrkva** who is working on supporter communications, and **Vicki Halpern** who is coordinating the team doing monitoring, evaluation and learning for the pilot. **Sri Subramanian** joined the Project Board in August, focusing on the mobile phone platform that is an integral part of the permEzone program.

Elin Lindhagen Duby, former Director of PRI-Kenya, joined the permEzone [Advisory Council](#) in September.

MEL – Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

The new [MEL Team](#) took shape in August, with Vicki Halpern being joined by Georgina McAllister (Garden Africa), Nicholas Syano (DNRC and PRI-Kenya), and California-based nutritionist Gerri French. They started preparing to define the framework that we will use to measure the impact of the pilot, and to play a key role in gathering evidence to demonstrate the potential of the permEzone program.

Supporter Communications

Our April [Newsletter](#) featured Sabre's first infographic and editorial content: *Pollinating Potential* illustrates how our supporters are a part of something much larger - foundational change agents for a program that will impact the lives of thousands of farmers.

Our May [Newsletter](#) featured *A Call to Farms*, with an infographic to help explain the role of the mobile phone platform, and what information could be shared and why this is such a powerful tool. This graphic is included at the end of this report.

Our July [Newsletter](#) focused on achieving our funding goal for the first pilot, explaining more about Garden Africa's work across the continent "with the most vulnerable people to find plant-based solutions to their everyday challenges".

Our November [Newsletter](#) introduced the Project Board, and discussed some of the challenges of working in Zone E – the electronic landscape.

Our December [Newsletter](#) highlighted the great work being done by PRI-Kenya with the coffee growers in Rongo, and featured Sheena Shah, who had stepped up as Programme Manager, taking responsibility for coordination of all PRI programs.

The Year Ahead...

We enter 2017 with many challenges to face, but clear expectations of learning many valuable lessons from the experiences of the preceding year, and finally being in a good position to move ahead with the pilot program in Kenya.

We re-iterate our profound thanks to all our supporters for sharing our vision, and making it possible for us to embark on this shared experiment to demonstrate the potential for farmers to become eco-social agents of good and lasting change.

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permEzone

CALL TO FARMS!

Our non-profit offers Kenyan farmers training in sustainable practices with 2 years of face to face and cellphone support, to create model farms – hubs for regenerative businesses and communities.

Cell phones can share info on:



82% of Kenyans own cell phones and more than half of those who don't own their own cell phone share with someone else.

-Pew Research Center Spring 2011 Global Attitudes survey

"Mobile phone networks have transformed communications in sub-Saharan Africa. It has also allowed Africans to skip the landline stage of development and jump right to the digital age." -PRC

If they can skip the outdated technology of fixed infrastructure and go straight to mobile phones and distributed power systems, then maybe they can also skip a generation of farming technology that involves a constant fight against nature, and skip ahead to the agro-ecological farming systems that work intelligently to take inspiration from the success of natural systems.

Help us get this important program off the ground!
Visit us to share, contribute and get involved at



permEzone.org