



In October's newsletter -

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As the FAO (the UN's *Food and Agriculture Organization*) urges us to change the future of migration by investing in food security and rural development, we're happy to celebrate [World Food Day](#) with the wonderful news that our training program for the farmers in Rongo and Asumbi is now underway. Our spirits are lifted even further by the success of our appeal to Greg Zahn to co-fund our Phase 1 pilot - more about Greg and his generous contribution below.

This month's update from our colleagues at *Sustainable Village Resources (SVR)* describes the workshop they held with both communities to kick off the *permEzone* training, with the farmers defining their own indicators of progress for our program of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL). Our colleagues at the *Permaculture Research Institute, Kenya* have just sent out their latest [newsletter](#), with details of the many projects they are involved in, including *permEzone*.



Helida Awiti, presenting the indicators developed by her Asumbi farmer's group during the workshop



Listening to the farmers

permEzone's key objective and purpose is to build community-based eco-social resilience, food security, and cooperative practices that help build more resilient local economies for small-holder farmers. It is therefore necessary for farmers to understand the expected overall impact of the project that revolves around resilient and empowered communities. No better way for them to understand this than to be the ones who define the key indicators that will be used to track and evaluate the program's impact, and this was the purpose of the workshops held with the farmers last week, as described in SVR's update below.

Our new Co-funder

When *Greg Zahn* moved back from Washington DC to Wisconsin, where he spent his childhood, he set about restoring his new farm, [Circle Union Farm](#), to ecological health and balance by putting the principles of permaculture into practice.



Greg has been an invaluable supporter of PRI-Kenya since its initiation, and now sits on the PRI-Kenya International Advisory Board. Sheena Shah, the Director of PRI-Kenya, introduced us to Greg as a donor to PRI-Kenya and the partner organizations they work with. She added that Greg visits them at least once a year and is particularly very familiar with the Rongo Project. Greg subsequently let us know that he would be interested in receiving a request for funding from PermEzone for the Rongo project, and responded to our proposal by quickly agreeing to move forward with an initial payment of \$5000 from his charitable trust.

Update from the team at Sustainable Village Resources

Receive our heartfelt greeting from permEzone SVR-Rongo team! The political temperatures have been hot and a lot of uncertainty is felt on the political fate of this great Nation, Kenya. We are lucky that the situation is however not as bad in village centres such as Rongo like it is in major towns (Kisumu, Nairobi and Mombasa). We have, therefore, been able to go about our businesses as usual. The permEzone team has put in huge efforts and dedication that has resulted in great progress once again today!



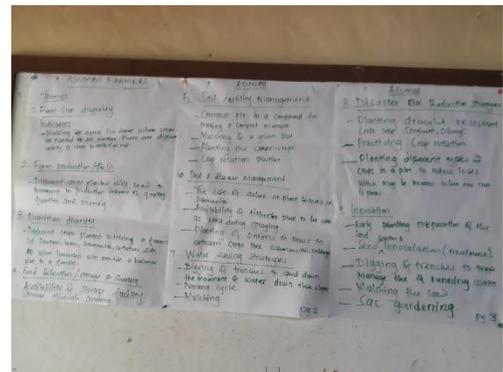
Farmers in the MEL workshop in Rongo discuss their priorities



Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Workshop

Our first MEL workshop this week was extremely successful. The workshop was participatory with the project team playing a guiding role. The two-day event started off with a discussion of two key terms to describe the project's potential impact - *Resilience* and *Agency/Empowerment* - and the various themes under each overall impact. The farmers then developed key indicators under each theme.

Under *Resilience* these themes included: Crop diversity, Production/yield, Nutritional diversity, Seeds (selection, storage, and sharing), Soil fertility management, Water (rainwater harvesting and water conservation strategies), Disaster risk reduction strategies, and Innovation. Under *Agency/Empowerment*, we had the following themes: Confidence, Cooperation and sharing in the community, Decision-making (in the household, the farmers group and the community) and Innovation.



Some of the Indicators Displayed on the board after group discussion

Next Steps

The team are now set to meet again this week to plan the final PDC (Permaculture Design Certification) course layout before they commence the trainings with the farmers every Thursday and Friday for the next three months. They will have separate day sessions in Rongo and Asumbi to make movement easier amongst themselves, and the farmers will get to work in their own context making it more effective. A pre-meeting before each training starts will help the team divide their responsibilities accordingly and work on facilitation outputs and deliverables, to the best of their abilities!

Farmer Profile - Clemence Akoko Opata

Clemence Akoko Opata, 68 years of age, is a permEzone project farmer from Kamagambo South, and belongs to one of the groups who have previously worked with SVR in Rongo. Here is what he had to say after the training:

Healthy soils are very fundamental in any attempt to achieve resilience; especially against calamities that see smallholder farmers go without food. It is central in achieving global and national food security. I am very happy that this training took place at this point in time. It now gives us an urge to take a closer look at the model farm that is already established at by Caleb Omollo – SVR Project Founder and extension service aid to permEzone. The most fascinating thing for me now is that I will not just take a look at the forest – I will be looking at the food forest with a goal; a goal to identify key potential areas for improvement so that when I finally set up my own, I maximize the potential reap. I am very happy to have been part of this training. Now I can also develop indicators to assess my own success on my own farm. Thank you PermEzone!



Clemence Akoko, presenting the indicators developed by the Rongo group during the workshop.

What we're sharing...

Recently posted on the permEzone Facebook page ...

The seventh annual [Soil & Nutrition Conference](#) - exploring principles, techniques and practices at the intersection of farm and human ecosystems that can be applied to improve environmental sustainability, food quality, and overall well-being. Nov 29-30 - Southbridge, Massachusetts.

The [Green Gold documentary](#) by John D. Liu, helping us to understand that functional ecosystems are the source of all wealth and well-being, and how important it is that we start working together to return the entire planet to functionality. Essential watching.

The 70th annual [State of Food and Agriculture report](#) by the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), calls for an “agroterritorial” approach focused on connecting cities and towns with their surrounding rural areas to drive more sustainable and inclusive rural development.



PLEASE BECOME A SUSTAINING DONOR

We now have the funding we need for the first year of our Phase 1 pilot with Sustainable Village Resources in Rongo, and to run the mobile phone platform for two years across multiple sites. Now we need your help to keep the pilot running through to the end. If you commit to a **regular monthly donation** that will help us to start planning the next phase of the pilot.



Thanks to everyone who already donated!!

Spread the Word!

Please let people know that we're looking for [contributions](#) to support the program; any help you can give to [spread the word](#) will be hugely appreciated.

Thanks again as always for your support

Hugh and the permEzone team



permEzone is a project of [Empowerment Works](#), a 501(c)3 non-profit, and an international project of the [Permaculture Association](#) (Britain).

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