



permEzone Newsletter – January 2017

The Slow Development Movement



Mobile phone use in the tree nursery at the Drylands Natural Resources Centre

We hope that you had a great holiday with family and friends and enjoying what is definitely not going to be a dull New Year! As we scramble through our day to day routine, trying to do as much as we can in the shortest time possible, it can feel overwhelming to consider the many small but necessary tasks we face alongside the mighty goals we want to achieve. Is it possible that what is really needed to make lasting change is to actually *slow down*? To hear other voices, to allow time to gather the data and facts that we need in order to think and plan with a fuller context? To allow the solutions to arrive, rather than force a set of preconceived notions onto a situation?

When life feels like a never-ending race, it may seem almost comical to suggest slowing down to do more. It is a paradigm shift to realize that, to make good solid progress in meaningful ways, we need to take it slow. This seems particularly true in the case of international development; instead of detached and remote stake-holders rushing in with a budget, expecting a fast return on investment, then dashing out before real change has time to take root, we suggest a completely different approach: *Slow Development*.

In this extract from an article recently published online by [Permaculture Magazine North America](#), Hugh Kelly explores his journey to arrive at Slow Development and the potential benefits of this approach:

THE SLOW DEVELOPMENT MOVEMENT

Hugh Kelly

The Indian economist and Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen, has defined development as: *a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy*. (Sen, 1999) The idea that people should be free from food insecurity, malnutrition, poverty and lack of opportunity are the true roots of most development projects.

How to achieve these goals is more controversial, as is the idea that development should not be seen as something that ‘we’ do to ‘them,’ but as things that we do for ourselves. Participatory methods that are prevalent in literature about development methods all too often fail to make it out into the field. Even these participatory development initiatives may depend on the role of outside experts to design and deliver interventions, rather than empowering people to design their own solutions with appropriate training and support.

I see rural development in terms of empowering people to bring about the enduring change they seek to improve food security and livelihoods. Permaculture has a role to play in meeting these goals, and in building the resilience to deal with an uncertain future in all eco-social complexities. In Issue #1 of Permaculture Magazine North America, Erik Ohlsen challenges us to find ways to scale up permaculture. A great way to meet this challenge would be to produce compelling evidence that permaculture can and should be a component part of rural development initiatives.

Read the full article on the [PMNA website](#) to learn more about how the permEzone program is designed to make the most of existing resources to foster the growth of permaculture communities; to demonstrate that farmers applying permaculture design principles can work collectively to develop locally-appropriate approaches to regenerative farming; and that this leads directly to sustainable improvements in food security and livelihoods.

Please share this link and spread the word - there is another way!
(permaculturemag.org/2016/12/the-slow-development-movement/)

The **permEzone** Team



Nicholas Syano, founder of the [Drylands Natural Resource Center](#) (DNRC), where the first phase of the permEzone pilot is due to start later this year. This will be the start of our program to gather evidence of the potential benefits of embedding a permaculture approach within the broad context of slow development...

Please make a [contribution](#), and consider becoming a regular donor if you can. Your donations will be used to provide training and support to farmers in East Africa, and to collect and evaluate data to demonstrate the impact of the program. This is a chance to make a real difference by empowering people in impoverished rural communities to work together to build resilience and improve the lives of current and future generations.



Please make a [contribution](#) if you can.

Any further help you can give to [spread the word](#) will be hugely appreciated.

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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