

In November's newsletter -

- Report from the symposium on Climate Change and Drought Resilience
- Update from the team at SVR in Rongo
- What we're sharing

Despite continuing political uncertainty, and heavy rainfall that has made life difficult for the farming community with some roads impassable in Migori County where the pilot is underway, our colleagues at *Sustainable Village Resources* (SVR) are continuing with their training program. Their latest report is summarized below.



Sheena Shah, Teresia Ng'an'ga, Charles Mugarura and Gai Cullen at the Symposium at Strathmore University, Nairobi

Symposium on Climate Change and Droughts in Africa

Earlier this year, Sheena Shah circulated the announcement for a Symposium at Strathmore University, Nairobi on Climate Change and Drought Resilience. Sheena suggested that we should collaborate on a proposal to present permaculture and agroecology as practical strategies to carry forward this agenda.

Our proposal was accepted by the conference organizers, and led to a collaborative effort to create a paper entitled *Building Eco-Social Resilience in the face of climate change and drought: How permaculture pedagogy and praxis can benefit rural communities and their environment*, by David Yisrael Epstein HaLevi, Gregory William Misiaszek, Hugh Kelly, Sheena Shah, Charles Mugarura, and Liam Walsh.

The symposium took place on November 7th and 8th, attended by Sheena Shah and Gai Cullen from PRI-Kenya, and Charles Mugarura from PRI-Uganda who reported back that the paper was well-received, and helped forge some interesting connections, including with the Climate Innovation Centre within Strathmore University. Representatives of International Water Management Institute and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification asked for copies of our paper for review. Some of the conference delegates signed up for the Introduction to Permaculture course led by Charles in Nairobi a few days after the conference ended. The paper will be published by the conference organizers in due course.

A key piece of feedback from the symposium is the need for more work to produce the kind of data that can feed into the broader discourse in academic and NGO circles about the potential for different development paradigms and responses to carry forward the UN's sustainable development goals. This strikes to the heart of the permEzone program which aims to develop a framework that will facilitate this urgent need. If we're going to scale up permaculture to become a normal part of the development response, we need to engage with the agencies that are carrying forward the development agenda with data that fits their models for measuring impact.

This creates an interesting challenge for us, because the permEzone model is based in the idea that every community will have unique needs that require a unique response, and that change will only be effective and sustainable if it grows out of the community. This focus on, and commitment to, the empowerment of community control of the development process extends to the definition of the indicators of change that are used to measure the program's impact in each community. One of our biggest challenges at this stage of the program is to design a framework for MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning) that meets both needs – the need for the community to define its own measures of meaningful change, and the need for the program as a whole to pull each individual data set together into a set of measures that are broadly comparable with those in use by the wider development community. Whatever happens, we are determined to avoid the temptation to create a set of universal indicators – no box-ticking allowed!



Caleb and Reagan during a training session in Rongo

REPORT ON 2nd TRAINING WORKSHOP IN RONGO AND ASUMBI

The workshop was basically on Permaculture Design. We started with the lead farmers in Rongo on 31st October 2017 then proceeded to Asumbi on 3rd November 2017.

We introduced the farmers to the concepts of Permaculture Design under the following sub-headings:

- 1) Element Analysis
- 2) Zonation
- 3) Sector analysis

Each of these aspects of design were defined and discussed in detail, and then the farmers were divided into two groups to walk around the farm and do the following:

- Identify the zones
- Identify the elements in these zone
- Identify the elements that have been correctly placed and give reasons
- Identify the elements that have been wrongly placed, give reasons and how they should be placed
- Sketch proper zones for the farm and present

The farmers were advised to do the same individually for their farms when they go back home. The groups discussed and presented their work and after the presentations, the facilitators gave their input. As we undertake these workshops, we always compare with the conventional methods to enhance the farmers understanding.

The next trainings are scheduled for 9th and 10th November 2017 for Rongo and Asumbi respectively.



Farmers in Asumbi during a group discussion session

What we're sharing... *Recently posted on the permEzone Facebook page ...*

The first in a year-long [series on agroforestry](#) looks at the benefits in terms of food security, curbing deforestation, preserving cultural diversity, and fighting climate change in Cameroon. Supporting indigenous practices, developed and refined over millennia, that are sustainable and integrated approaches to managing ecosystems in a multi-functional way.

A [report](#) in the UK's Guardian newspaper discusses a growing interest in soil health and sustainability amongst farmers and in parliament, quoting the UK environment secretary Michael Gove as saying: "Countries can withstand coups d'état, wars and conflict...but no country can withstand the loss of its soil and fertility".

PLEASE BECOME A SUSTAINING DONOR

With funding in place 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, 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

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