

**permEzone**: spreading knowledge. peace  
& love this holiday!



Season's Greetings from the team at *permEzone*! We are ever-thankful for your support as we pursue our program of expanding opportunity and empowerment for small-scale farmers and their communities, working with them to rebuild resilience, biodiversity, and hope for the future.

This month we bring you another update from our colleagues at Sustainable Village Resources (SVR), including the latest news from their training program with the farmers in Rongo and Asumbi, and we ask you to take advantage of a special opportunity to boost your donation through the PayPal Giving fund, which is only available through to the end of December.

## **In this month's newsletter**

- **What we're learning**
- **Boosted donations in December**
- **Report from SVR**
- **What we're sharing**

## ***What we're learning***

During our monthly Skype call with the team in Rongo at the end of November, they confirmed that they'd completed five training sessions with the farmers, and were taking a week out to plan for next year. They were happy to be able to report that they've had a 100% attendance record in both locations, and are very impressed with the farmers' ability to absorb and reflect back the material they are sharing and that, rather than waiting to complete the whole course, the farmers are already going home to their farms and trying out some of the ideas they've picked up from the training.

We came away from our conference call with a strong feeling of being in the right place at the right time, because the farmers are so eager to find alternatives to the conventional farming approaches, and often express surprise that they don't already know about techniques like composting that seem so simple and obvious. We also heard how the training team are also learning from the farmers (and their farms) as they start to rediscover and re-evaluate the practices of their parents and grandparents in the light of this different way of thinking about farming.

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## ***Donations boosted in December***

Now that the training program for the first phase of our pilot program is well underway in Rongo, and we've already learnt so much from this, we're starting to plan the next phase which we hope to start in a second location next spring.

We will need your help to fund this second phase of the program, and here's some good news... If you have a PayPal account, you can make a donation through the PayPal Giving Fund, and they will forego any processing fees and add 1% to your donation. To take advantage of this offer before the end of the year, please donate [here](#).



*Caleb Omollo walking on Mary Aila's farm. Caleb and the team are fascinated because the farmer is already trying to implement the swale and intercropping concept. She says her next project on the farm is mulching.*

## UPDATE ON THE LATEST TRAINING IN RONGO AND ASUMBI

Warm greetings from *permEzone* project field team. We are happy to share our victory and success stories from Asumbi and Rongo. We have had a great time interacting with our farmers and as usual, there is always a story to tell, this is the beautiful side of farming!

### ***What the Farmers Teach Us...***

It is has been a great privilege working with farmers from different generations. The Rongo team has never missed an opportunity to learn from both our elderly farmers and even the young, with whom we share a generation. It is quite sad that some of this very powerful knowledge has gone deep into the graves of oblivion. During several sessions in Rongo the farmers would share their stories about how their old folks used to do things and the session would be lit with excitement. Here, Mr. Wambi, a retired teacher and a farmer with permEzone told us how his forefathers would use both wet and dry cow dung to cook. He emphasized that the food was really well cooked with almost no energy going to waste. With all honesty we think such knowledge would be a game changer especially in this era of fight against climate change. Farmers have a lot to teach us too with some of their own ongoing practices, when we sit down with them to share, we achieve more than we originally thought and this helps us in actually refining our curriculum further just through receiving input and indicators from them.



*Mr Wambi talking about burning cow dung to cook during an interactive session*

### ***Implementation in progress...***

The permEzone permaculture training has been ongoing in both Asumbi and Rongo and all we have seen is success stories. The team is always encouraged by the extra miles our farmers will go – not only to educate the educators, but also to implement these concepts on their farms. We have had a couple of them say, “I can’t wait for the training to end, I can’t look at my farm in the bad state it is, when I have gained the knowledge to improve it and eventually my own well-being through simple and practical techniques. This is why I have started the implementation process,” - Mary Aila. The farmers have taught us that there is a huge desire to look at a different direction with farming, but it is always hard to make that bold first step with the majority citing failure. We would like to put emphasis on giving farmers a chance to share their experiences because most of them have more local knowledge than we do and we have a lot to learn from them. Besides, it makes them feel part of the conversation and nothing motivates a human being more than this!



*Farmers consulting during a group activity. They are walking around the farm to look for elements that are wrongly placed on Mr. Nenas farm during a design training. Some of our farmers are already practicing permaculture.*

**What we're sharing...** *Recent posts on the permEzone Facebook page have emphasized the benefits of regenerating healthy soils...*

We celebrated #WorldSoilDay2017 and shared the UN [Food and Agriculture Organization's plea](#) to cherish the ground we walk on because caring for our soils leads to increased food security, greater biodiversity, fewer greenhouse gases, better livelihoods, cleaner water, and more medicines.

An article in the [NY Times](#) puts the emphasis on sequestering carbon in soil to reduce climate change by extracting carbon from the atmosphere, and to restore the health of degraded soil and increase agricultural yields.

The proceedings of the 2017 Soil Not Oil International Conference have been [posted online](#), so that you can watch them and support their work in return for a sliding scale donation.

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## **PLEASE BECOME A SUSTAINING DONOR**

With sufficient funding in place for 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 program running. If you commit to a **regular monthly donation** that will help us to start planning the next phase of the pilot in a new location.



*Thanks to everyone who already donated!!*

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### **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.*

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*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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