

As we move forward into a new year, we offer huge thanks for the generosity of our many supporters, including Greg Zahn for his continued support in co-funding our Phase 1 Pilot Program. Much gratitude and appreciation for the guidance of our advisors, the commitment of the *permEzone* Project Board, and the dedicated hard work of the teams at Permaculture Research Institute Kenya (PRI-Kenya), and Sustainable Village Resources (SVR). Extra special thanks to the farmer representatives in Rongo and Asumbi for believing in the potential of this program, and making such a whole-hearted commitment to take part in the program of training and extension work.

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Looking back at 2017

2017 saw *permEzone* emerge from its cocoon and take flight, with 75 farmers in Rongo and Asumbi joining the SVR network, and 20 of their representatives joining the training, and starting to try out new ideas on their own farms.

We achieved our fundraising goal of covering the two-year budget for the Phase 1 pilot, and raised sufficient funds to cover the budget for the first two years of operation for the new cell-phone platform.

A particular achievement for the combined team has been the success of our participatory approach to involving the farmers in the whole process, with workshops for the lead farmers to co-design the training curriculum and to select the most appropriate indicators of change to be used in evaluating the long-term impact of the program. This framework for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) will stand us in good stead as we start to scale out the program.

The Challenge Ahead

In the coming year, we hope to establish three more pilot phases in different communities in East Africa. We are actively researching potential sites, and hope to announce our Phase 2 partners within the next few months.

Getting the program established in these new sites will be a huge reality check for us on the transferability of our learning outcomes from each preceding phase, especially Phase 1 in Rongo. How well have we documented our processes; what is reusable and what needs to be reimagined for each new phase; how can we continue to develop our online resources to promote and support the program for the years ahead?

One of our biggest challenges will be to develop new funding streams to bring in the funds to pay for the continuation and fulfillment of the pilot, and we hope that you will share any potential sources of funding that you are aware of that could help us achieve these goals.

This time next year, I hope we can look back on another successful year, and that I can thank you all for your continued support and encouragement in developing this program to its full potential.



Back to School.

UPDATE FROM SVR AS THE TRAINING RESUMES IN RONGO AND ASUMBI

Seeing the farmers for the first time in 2018 was a pleasure once again! The farmers were also happy to see us embark on the trainings and build momentum again.

Last week we focused on training the farmers on food forest establishment. It ignited a spark amongst the farmers and the whole concept was received quite well as this goes toward long-term food security. We focused heavily on planting guilds, intercropping and components of each plant and tree species that directly complement each other and nourishes the soil with natural fertilization long term. Also, how plants deposit nitrogen back in to the soil.

Just like this, we are nourishing our bodies with a variety and mixture of crop, thus addressing nutrition security and longevity.

In our next sessions, we want to address the fundamentals of growing more variety and intercropping - this is also a huge component of permaculture. As we know food security is the number one heated topic today and we want to ask farmers what this means to them, we want to hear their ideas of food security and then tackle the topic from there.

Loss of soil fertility due to mono cropping and inappropriate crop variety practices over time has led to serious degradation and harmful impact, also due to use of fertilizers.

Much of this topic will emphasize how can we use the tools given to date, address these issues, so farmers can critically assess this and discuss for themselves too. We believe this approach could help disseminate the project implementation stage of *permEzone*, which we get in to after the course is over in a few weeks.

Permaculture truly is the framework that embodies us to think practically and adopt the model for the current context we are working with and in designing unique models. We believe both Rongo and Asumbi farmers will share and give us something unique to work with. Makes it more exciting as we go on with the trainings in disseminating the content. We feel that the implementation stage is going to be the most prominent stage!



The permEzone team and the farmers left the training feeling motivated so quickly.

What we shared...

*A recent post on the **permEzone** Facebook page shares lessons learned from a successful regenerative farm in France, and their process of coming to understand that permaculture is not a technique, or set of techniques, but a design process for creating a framework within which appropriate techniques can be brought together...*

Maddy Harland of Permaculture Magazine provides an [insightful interview](#) with Perrine Herve-Gruyer of La Ferme du Bec Hellouin in Normandy about the process of reaching an understanding of the full potential of permaculture, and achieving ecologically and economically regenerative outcomes.

PLEASE BECOME A SUSTAINING DONOR

We need your help to maintain our capacity to support the *permEzone* program, and to start scaling it out with the next phase of the pilot. Please consider a regular monthly donation to help us maintain the momentum of this work.



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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