

## Firelight Newsflash! 15 September, 2008

Dear Partners,

With the dry season coming to end, many organizations, community groups, families and individuals will begin to start plowing the fields, preparing for the rains to come. In doing a recent analysis of all our grantee-partners in eight countries, we realized that more than 50% of our partners are doing some form of agricultural work as a Firelight-funded activity. With this in mind and planting time almost here, we decided to share some information and resources on agriculture, which may be useful to you this agricultural season.

Best,

The Firelight Team

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Is your organization interested in new and innovative ways to farm and garden? If yes, consider taking a new approach to how you view the land, crops and the overall farming system. Permaculture is a way to view this new approach.

### **What is Permaculture?**

The word "Permaculture" is the combination of the two words "permanent" and "agriculture". It is an agricultural philosophy that allows us to use the resources that we have around us to their fullest potential. It is the opposite of destructive industrial-agricultural methods, which can poison the land and water, reduce biodiversity, and remove billions of tons of soil from previously fertile landscapes. But by observing and learning from our environment, such as how nature replenishes its soil and protects and conserves its water resources, we can learn how to imitate these natural processes in our daily living. The more closely that we can work with nature, the more likely we are to establish a balance which will provide us with the things that we need without hurting the environment.

Permaculture is not limited to plant and animal agriculture, but also includes community planning and development, use of appropriate technologies, and adoption of concepts and philosophies that are people-centered and context and culture specific.

### **What are the characteristics of Permaculture?**

- Permaculture is one of the most holistic, integrated systems

analysis and design methodologies found in the world.

- Permaculture can be applied to create productive ecosystems from the human-use standpoint or to help degraded ecosystems recover balance, health and wildness.
- Permaculture values and validates traditional knowledge and experience. Permaculture incorporates sustainable agriculture practices and land management techniques and strategies from the local environment. Permaculture can be a bridge between traditional culture and modern society.
- Permaculture promotes organic agriculture, which does not use pesticides to pollute the environment.
- Permaculture aims to maximize symbiotic and synergistic relationships between components of soil, water, sun, flora, fauna, etc.
- Permaculture can be applied to urban planning as well as rural land design.
- Permaculture design is site specific, client specific, and culture specific.

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## **Resources on Permaculture and New Farming and Gardening Techniques**

1) The Permaculture Activist

<http://www.permacultureactivist.net/pcresources/Africa.htm>

In the world's longest-lived permaculture periodical you'll find information about [permaculture design](#), [edible landscaping](#), [bioregionalism](#), [ecovillage design](#), [aquaculture](#), [naturalbuilding](#), [earthworks](#), [forestry](#), [soils](#), [agriculture](#), [urban sustainability](#), [renewable energy](#), [regeneration & restoration](#), and [many practical solutions](#) to the challenges of life in an age of energy decline and Peak Everything. The website above has a list of individuals and organizations in Africa working on permaculture.

2) Book available online! Sustainable Agriculture Extension Manual for East and

Southern Africa

<http://www.iirr.org/book.htm>

Sustainable agriculture covers a wide range of topics: soil and water conservation, using organic matter to maintain soil fertility, pest management, cropping systems, livestock management, and many others. For agriculture to be sustainable, it must take into account not only the physical environment (soils, climate, ecosystem), but also local social and economic conditions. Efforts to promote sustainable farming often use community-based research and extension approaches.

This manual covers all these three aspects of sustainable agriculture: the physical, socio-economic and organizational dimensions. Drawing on the experiences of numerous development and research agencies throughout Eastern and Southern Africa, the manual includes sections on technology development and extension, credit and marketing, land use, gender, soil and water conservation, soil fertility, cropping systems, livestock extension, and livestock technologies. Appendices list resource organizations and references and training materials where readers can find further information. Written in clear, easy-to-understand language, the manual is illustrated with numerous line drawings.

The manual will be indispensable for extension agents, non-government organizations, field technicians, and all involved in designing and promoting sustainable agriculture in Eastern and Southern Africa.

3) Publications Available to Order - Africa Regional Centre Publications from the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction

International Institute of Rural Reconstruction Africa Regional Centre P.O. Box 66873, 00800 Nairobi, Kenya. Tel: 254-2-4442610/4440991 Fax: 254-2-4448148 [publications@iirr-africa.org](mailto:publications@iirr-africa.org)

See publications list and order form attached.

4) **Downloadable Manual from Hesperian: A Community Guide to Environmental Health**

From toilets to toxics, from watershed management to waste management, from raising crops to rising temperatures, how we use natural resources affects our

health and well-being. This highly illustrated guide helps health promoters, development workers, environmental activists, and community leaders take charge of their environmental health. In small villages and large cities, **A Community Guide to Environmental Health** can provide the tools, knowledge, and inspiration to begin transforming the crisis in environmental health. This book contains activities to stimulate critical thinking and discussion, inspirational stories, and instructions for simple health technologies such as water purification methods, safe toilets, and non-toxic cleaning products. 23 chapters cover topics including:

- Preventing and reducing harm from toxic pollution
- Forestry, restoring land, and planting trees
- Protecting community water and watersheds
- Food security and sustainable farming
- Environmental health at home
- Solid waste and health care waste
- How to reduce harm from mining, oil, and energy production

With dozens of activities to stimulate critical thinking and discussion, instructions for simple health technologies such as safe toilets, safe cleaning methods, and water purification methods, and hundreds of drawings to make the messages clear, **A Community Guide to Environmental Health** will be useful for people just beginning to address environmental health threats, as well as people with many years experience in the field.

[http://www.hesperian.org/publications\\_download.php](http://www.hesperian.org/publications_download.php)

#### 5) Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security

<http://www.ruaf.org/node/527>

The mission of the RUAF Foundation is to contribute to urban poverty reduction, employment generation and food security and to stimulate participatory city governance and improved urban environmental management. RUAF has functioned since 1999 as a global network of 6 regional organisations that share a common vision on urban development and poverty reduction and together implement an international programme focused on urban agriculture and food security.

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## **Some organizations working in east and southern Africa on Permaculture and Sustainable Agriculture**

### **KENYA**

1) SACDEP (Sustainable [Agriculture](#) Community Develop. Prog.)

PO Box 1134, Thika, Kenya

Ph: int+ 254 0151 30541 Fax: int+ 254 0151 30055

2) Kenya Institute of Organic Farming

PO Box 34972, Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: +254 67 25009/ 24264 Cell: +254 733 799072/ 817240

[kiof@iconnect.co.ke](mailto:kiof@iconnect.co.ke)

[www.kiof.org](http://www.kiof.org)

### **Lesotho**

1) Berea Agriculture **Group**

Mrs. Molly Letela,

Assumption High School,

PO Box 572, Teyateyaneng 200, Lesotho

Tel +266-500557

2) Rural Self-help Development Association

PO Box 0523, Maseru West 105, Lesotho

Tel +266-311279, fax +266-310458

### **MALAWI**

1) The Regional Schools and Colleges Permaculture (ReSCOPE) Programme

P.O. Box 32280, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi

Telephone +2651 831 373; fax +2651 831 363; text +2659 788 373

Email: [rescope@sdpn.org.mw](mailto:rescope@sdpn.org.mw) or [zipscope@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:zipscope@yahoo.co.uk)

2) Permaculture Network in Malawi

Crossroads Post Dot Net X-124

Lilongwe, Malawi

[nordin@eomw.net](mailto:nordin@eomw.net)

01-707-213 (home)

09-333-073, 09-926-153 (mobile)

## Rwanda

1) Rwanda Development Gateway

[http://www.rwandagateway.org/rubrique.php3?id\\_rubrique=76](http://www.rwandagateway.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=76)

## SOUTH AFRICA

1) Food and Trees for Africa

8 The Firs, Humber Street, Woodmead, Gauteng, 2128 RSA

Phone: +27 (0)11 803-9604 /6708 Fax: +27 (0)11 803-9750

[www.trees.org.za](http://www.trees.org.za)

Two online newsletters dealing with permaculture, tree crops, agro-forestry, tree planting, and community forestry in South Africa. A notable source of grassroots information, contacts, and resource listings for Africa. Back issues are available from 1995 through 1999.

2) South Africa Social Investment Exchange

<http://www.sasix.co.za/projects/view/FS-NW-MAY-0063/>

FTFA is a national greening organization that develops, manages and promotes greening, sustainable natural resource management and food security programs that contribute to poverty alleviation, improved environments, capacity-building and skills development, increasingly with people living with HIV/AIDS.

## TANZANIA

### 1) Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Cooperatives (MAFC)

<http://www.agriculture.go.tz>

To deliver quality agricultural and cooperative services, provide a conducive environment to stakeholders, build capacity of Local Government Authorities and facilitate the private sector to contribute effectively to sustainable agricultural production, productivity and cooperative development. The MAFC will fulfill this by: Formulating, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of relevant policies in the agricultural sector and monitoring crop regulating institutions, Collaborating with the private sector, local government and other service providers to provide relevant technical services in research, extension, irrigation, plant protection, crop promotion, land use, mechanization, agricultural inputs, information services and cooperative development Undertaking crop monitoring and early warning, maintaining strategic food reserves and promoting appropriate post harvest technologies, and encouraging, undertaking and coordinating research and development and training

### 2) Sokoine University of Agriculture

<http://www.suanet.ac.tz/>

The Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) offers short-term in-service programs to field and operational staff as well as training and extension services to farmers and community leaders. The Development Studies Institute (DSI) acquaints undergraduate students with the challenges of development and how to overcome them.

### 3) Techno Serve

[http://www.technoserve.org/work\\_impact/locations/tanzania.aspx](http://www.technoserve.org/work_impact/locations/tanzania.aspx)

Techno Serve's program's focus on [developing entrepreneurs, building businesses and industries](#) and [improving the over all business environment](#). Over the course of four decades, we've learned what does and doesn't work. Our

scaled-up initiatives and our expansion into new industries and regions build upon and adapt our successful business models and programs.

## Uganda

1) Uganda Rural Development and Training Programme (URDT)

<http://www.urdt.net/sustainableAgriculture.html>

## Zambia

1) Agriculture Development Programme

Diocese of Ndola, PO Box 70244, Ndola, Zambia

Tel +260-2-612241

2) CARE-Zambia

Box 36238, Lusaka, Zambia

Tel +260-4-220134 to 37, 238042, fax +260-1-227108

3) Gwembe South Development Project

Box 4, Sinazongwe, Zambia

Tel +260-1-261580

4) Hodi

Kasiye Crescent, PO Box 36548, Lusaka, Zambia

Tel +260-1-290455, fax +260-290455, 292376

Email [hodi@zamnet.zm](mailto:hodi@zamnet.zm)

5) National Association for Peasant and Small Scale Farmers of Zambia

Box 37398, Lusaka, Zambia

Tel +260-1-238370S

## ZIMBABWE

1) Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre

P.O. Box CY301

Causeway Harare, Zimbabwe

Tell: +263-04-336151/303188 or +26391805929

Email: [fambidza@yahoo.com](mailto:fambidza@yahoo.com)

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### **Environmental Grants**

#### **UNDP Small Grants Program**

<http://sgp.undp.org/>

Launched in 1992, SGP supports activities of non-governmental and community-based organizations in developing countries towards climate change abatement, conservation of biodiversity, protection of international waters, reduction of the impact of persistent organic pollutants and prevention of land degradation while generating sustainable livelihoods.

#### **Global Greengrants Fund**

<http://www.greengrants.org/>

They make grants (typically \$500 to \$5,000) to grassroots groups in some of the world's most despoiled and impoverished places where other sources of support often are not available. GGF works to help people protect the environment, live sustainably, preserve biodiversity, and gain a voice in their own future.

#### **International Funders for Indigenous Peoples**

<http://www.internationalfunders.org/>

Established in 1999, IFIP is an affinity group of the Council on Foundations and the only affinity group based on a native reservation. IFIP was formed to provide a voice for increased, dedicated funding for international Indigenous initiatives, and a venue for communications and resource sharing among international funders of Indigenous peoples

### **The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**

<http://www.macfound.org/>

The MacArthur Foundation's program on Global Security and Sustainability is the major source of funding in Africa. The Program objectives are to promote peace within and among countries, healthy ecosystems worldwide, responsible reproductive choices, and the protection of human rights.

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### **9th International Permaculture Conference to be held in Africa in 2009**

Planning is underway for the next International Permaculture Conference and Convergence, IPC 9, which will be in Africa in October & November 2009. The Coordinator of IPC 9 is Mugove Walter Nyika of the Regional Schools and Colleges Permaculture (RESCOPE) Programme, in Malawi.

IPC9 Dates Announced:

- PDC Course (IPC9c), Harare, Zimbabwe, 11-23 October, 2009
- Conference (IPC9a), Pretoria, South Africa, 26-28 October, 2009
- Convergence (IPC9b), Mulanje, Malawi, 2-7 November,

2009

- Site Tours (IPC9d), 8-20 November, 2009

The proposed theme for IPC 9 is "Designing solutions for a sustainable future". Subthemes are: "Permaculture as a Regional Planning Tool for Sustainable Livelihoods and Earth Care, Food Security and Sovereignty through Organic Production and Marketing, Education, Green Economics and Lifestyles, Health and Nutrition, HIV/AIDS, Housing and Sustainable Cities, and Disaster Management."

Malawi will host the 9th International Permaculture Convergence, South Africa will host the 9th International Permaculture Conference, and Zimbabwe will host the 9th International Permaculture Design Course to be held at the Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre in Harare.

For more information, contact:

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+263-04-336151/303188 or +26391805929

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## **Quotes**

Drugs are no good without food in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and the essential role of proper nutrition has been forgotten.

~United Nations World Food Programme, 2006

"In the world there is a new collective force of people mobilising around the issue of peace but linking it to the need to protect the environment. But we must assert our collective vision and responsibility to shape that peace not only for our country but also for the whole of Africa."

~Wangari Maathai, Kenya, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Winner