



2020 Permaculture Design Grant

The Program & Grant:



Mainsprings and The Valley Foundation are hosting the Permaculture Institute of Tanzania's (PIT) second annual Permaculture Design Certification (PDC) Course from February 10-17, 2020, sponsored by the Reed Jules Oppenheimer Foundation. This 72-hour course will provide farmers and leaders of grassroots organizations with the knowledge and skills of permaculture design principals and concepts, equipping graduates with an internationally recognized certificate in Permaculture design. After completing

this course, graduates will have the knowledge necessary to design and implement, or improve, their very own permaculture farm and enable others to do the same. Much like the permaculture farms have done for Mainsprings, this new method of farming will help to improve the sustainability of the participating organizations, improve the nutritional value of the food they are serving to their participants, and help to educate their surrounding communities to better utilize their land. The PIT PDC course in February 2020 will be taught by internationally renowned permaculture expert Mark Shepard and Mainsprings' Head of PIT, Max Kitafula.

Organizations that are chosen to participate in this grant challenge will be asked to send at least one key staff member (preferably two) to the PDC training on Mainsprings' Kitongo campus. A travel allowance to Mwanza and the PDC Course Fees will be covered by the grant. Upon completion of the course, the organization will receive a seed grant to implement the

permaculture techniques learned on their own land, with design assistance and consulting provided by Mainsprings and/or the Valley Foundation. This seed grant can cover implementation needs such as installing key lines, trees, seed, basic farm equipment, and improved access to water. Both grantees and grantors will mutually agree upon a specific budget for the seed grant. Grantees will agree to be a part of PIT's growing permaculture network in East Africa, staying in touch with PIT staff and fellow PDC graduates through an online forum, and will be responsible for bi-annual picture updates of their permaculture farms and a yearly, basic online grant report. In order to be eligible for this grant, organizations must be able to prove ownership of a parcel of land suitable for agricultural purposes and a need for improved farming practices within their organization or be able to articulate why they are wanting to include permaculture practices to their organization in another way. Money acquired from the seed grant may not be used to purchase new land.

The Need:

Income averaging less than \$2 USD a day and a rapidly increasing rate of deforestation and soil depletion has put millions of Tanzanians at risk for malnutrition and other health risks, along with devastating harm to the environment they and so many others need to survive. This is why the education and implementation of alternate agricultural practices has become an increasing necessity for those millions who rely on agriculture as a major source of income and food security. Already there are dozens of organizations working in Tanzania who recognize the need to support small-hold farmers in their own community, as well as their needs for sustainable methods of improving food security, efficient utilization of their farmland, and a desire to lower their food budgets. Permaculture is a solution for this problem, but many of these organizations have never heard of permaculture and/or do not know what it really is or how to successfully create a permaculture program in their organization. For these organizations and for the farmers they serve, training and guided consultation from those who have successfully practiced permaculture for years in Tanzania, along with the necessary tools and equipment to get started, will give them the resources needed to change their lives and the environment around them in a symbiotic and timely fashion.



History:

Permaculture (derived from the concept of “permanent agriculture”) is a type of sustainable agriculture that seeks to replicate nature in a food producing farm, integrating a variety of perennial trees and plants with more traditional crops to increase variety and quantity of produce, improve soil quality, help with water retention, extend harvest seasons, and combat deforestation by introducing large quantities of trees in areas that are typically slashed for more traditional methods of farming. By transforming pieces of land into a rich, permaculture-based farm, people are better cared for (by having more and varied foods), the planet and general environment in an area become healthier (by reducing chemical usage and returning valuable nutrients and water to the soil), and farmers have enough excess to sell for a profit.

Mainsprings’ own permaculture transformation started in August of 2012, when longtime supporters within the Reed Jules Oppenheimer Foundation brought permaculture consultant Mark Shepard to the campus. Before this, Mainsprings used a common method of farming called mono-cropping, where entire fields would be filled with the same type of produce. But now, the landscape is filled with a variety of trees, shrubs, plants, and vines, with a variety of livestock integrated into the system to help improve soil quality. All of this works to replenish



the richness of the soil that was slowly depleted over time, helps prevent erosion, and ultimately, makes a much more productive farm. Additionally, the wide range of edible plants in the system means there is increased diversity in nutritious food harvested more often throughout the year. Currently, Mainsprings averages close to 20 tons of produce from its farm on its first campus in Kitongo and harvested over five tons of produce last year from its newly established second campus in Kahunda. Both campuses are located in the Mwanza region of Tanzania, right on the shores of Lake Victoria.

Encouraged by the success of its own farm, which helped to improve the nutritional value of the meals Mainsprings was serving, while simultaneously lowering the food costs of the organization, Mainsprings decided to found the Permaculture Institute of Tanzania (PIT) in January 2019. PIT seeks to spread the permaculture principals and practices to subsistence farmers and organizations across Africa. This ensures that organizations can be more sustainable and farmers can better feed their families and turn a profit, all while helping local

ecology, regional economies, and the planet. Mainsprings currently provides over 1,000 nutritious meals daily on its flagship campus, and a vast majority of the protein and produce comes directly from its permaculture farms.

The Valley Foundation is a nonprofit organization that focuses on building capacity of organizations and subsistence farmers globally to seamlessly integrate regenerative agriculture practices into their existing methods. The organization was born out of the belief that human and environmental health are intricately linked and that regenerative agriculture is one intersection that can have a huge impact on both. As a nonprofit based in the United States, The Valley Foundation builds capacity through site visits, educational seminars, demonstration plots, and continued support for organizations throughout the world. The Valley Foundation has been working as a partner with Mainsprings since 2012 to support the development and implementation of their permaculture farm.

The Reed Jules Oppenheimer Foundation (RJOF) is a private family foundation focused on improving human and environmental health globally. RJOF supports organizations focused on a wide range of strategies related to poverty alleviation, food security, environmental sustainability, and social justice. The foundation seeks to create meaningful change by making small grants to organizations aligned with our goals and values, and by engaging in capacity building efforts with our partners on the ground. The Oppenheimer family has been supporting Mainsprings since 2006 through grant-making and capacity building.

Grant Process:

Applicants must complete the grant application and submit it by December 20th, 2019. All applicants will be informed of their grant status no later than January 6th, 2020 and must be willing to send at least one key staff member (preferably two) to attend the PDC course at Mainsprings' campus from February 10-17 (*actual course dates, not including travel days*).

Successful grantees will:

- *Send at least one (preferably two) key staff members to the PDC course at Mainsprings Feb 10-17, 2019.*
- *Consult with Mainsprings and The Valley Foundation about your permaculture design implementation plan before starting physical implementation (can be done via phone, email or in person).*
- *Submit bi-annual photographs to Mainsprings and The Valley Foundation*
- *Work to host Mainsprings and/or Valley Foundation consultants for an annual site visit to your organization and agree to soil testing during that visit.*
- *Join the online PDC Graduate forum.*
- *Complete an annual grant report within 12 months of receiving the Seed Grant.*

Successful completion of the seed grant during Year 1 gives an applicant priority for future annual Growth Grants.