



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

## Permanent Culture

The Industrial Revolution and its short-term benefits and profits have led governments and business to perpetuate the unsustainability of industrialization and ignore indigenous traditions and practices – that often promote sustainability.

Makweti Sishekanu, with the Zambia National Farmers Union, says “what we have lost is essentially the permanent culture, *permaculture*.”

He says it’s a concept originally called permanent agriculture but later coined permanent culture because of the broader dimensions of life it emphasized; first, *care for people* – acknowledging the fact that without healthy ecosystems human life is unsustainable. Second; *care for the earth* – to live and work with rather than against natural systems, and third; *fair share or a return of surplus* – that everything the planet produces is enough for all and has to be reinvested back into the natural systems without generating waste.

# The Weekly

## Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

## The Problem: The Loss of the Permanent Culture

The earth has an amazing ability to regenerate itself sustainably, permanently and infinitely. It can support and perpetuate all life forms within a self-sustaining system.

Therefore, life on the planet has developed through cycles of this natural ecological culture; a culture that has informed many indigenous traditions and cultural practices of people across the world.

If our ancient ancestors had been blessed to keep written records, we would be publishing this rich and seemingly foreign, yet indigenous knowledge from our own cultural contexts.

With the advent of the industrial revolution, we seemingly lost our way – largely explaining our current environmental chaos globally.

Agriculture, for one, has come under intense pressure to feed the mouths of millions. Industrial productivity has drawn millions of people from their indigenous societies into a culture of reductionism; losing the ability to produce food and recycle energy.

As a result, many aspects of the indigenous socio-ecological culture with which people have evolved have been lost.

## Activities for Journalists

Sustainable development is fundamentally based on the three principles of permaculture: care for people, care for the Earth and the recycling of surplus resources.

The philosophy of working with, and not against the natural systems requires a thoughtful observation of nature rather than thoughtless exploitation of it.

While deeply rooted in indigenous cultures, Permaculture was popularized in the 1970s by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren mainly to counter the productive systems of the postindustrial era.

The Permaculture movement has been severely criticized – and is perceived as backwards -- even today. Yet, in growing circles, governments, civil society organizations, business, NGOs, individuals and groups are using the tenets of permaculture to promote organic farming, conservation farming, agroforestry, farm forestry, rain water harvesting, vegetarianism, and, most importantly, sustainable development.

Makweti Sishekanu, of the *Zambian National Farmers Union* says it is almost as if the world is spinning backwards to rediscover its lost culture.

**There are a variety of stories that can be created on this topic.**

Does your local government or any NGO's promote Permaculture techniques?

Talk to Makweti Sishekanu about what type of

crop yields one can get from using Permaculture techniques.

How many people in your community collect rain water for irrigation? Interview them. They can encourage others to do the same.

Organize a call-in show – with farmers who practice Permaculture techniques and invite a specialist to discuss the practice.

Interview an expert about how industrial agriculture contributes to climate change – by destroying the soil and polluting the air and water supply.

Do a comparison of crop yields from conventional farming techniques and Permaculture practices.

### Community Engagement

Urge listeners to send SMS, call or stop by the radio station to talk about Permaculture issues. Do they believe the government could do more to encourage the use of Permaculture?

*Our thanks to Makweti Sishekanu at the *Zambian National Farmers Union* for his contribution to this week's Bulletin.*

### Useful Links

Information about permaculture: Makweti Sishekanu, National Farmers Union Zambia: +260-211-252-649 or +260-965-098-360. Email: [makwetiskanu@yahoo.com](mailto:makwetiskanu@yahoo.com)

Good source of information: Vincent Ziba, National Coordinator, Community-based National Resource Management Forum, Zambia; Email: [vinceziba@yahoo.com](mailto:vinceziba@yahoo.com). Phone: 0966-246-924

Another good source of information on Permaculture: <http://imaginezambia.org/tag/permaculture/>

Good story about teaching Permaculture techniques to prisoners in Zambia: <http://www.weforest.org/Zambia-Kamfisa-prison>