

Permaculture, The Big Idea with 7 billion solutions *And you are one of them*

TO START: big box – open it. Bring out signs, climate change, deforestation, water pollution, soil erosion, mass migration That's all?

Hunt for more

Find another box labeled Permaculture open it Pull out the following signs:

Urban revival

Reforestation

Replenishing rivers, ponds and aquifers

Restore food locally

Treasure biodiversity

Invest ethically

Divest of destruction

Small scale mosaic landscapes

Care for the next generation

Live ethically

Perhaps there's A Big Idea here?

But before we begin. An Australian Custom - Welcome to Land

"To create a mess in which we perish by our own inaction makes nonsense of our claims to consciousness and morality", said Bill Mollison co-origiator of permaculture

Hello and warm greetings

We, permaculturists have been active for forty years working to fix the mess. Permaculture is the transitional process that can help. **We have made significant achievements and we are on the side of life.**

SLIDE 1: Some elements and patterns have made permaculture successful and enabled its infiltration into almost every country and profession in the world.

Its success is due to three factors: Need + Content + Processes

1.**NEED:** Across the world the realisation is accelerating that we are on the edge of something big and probably environmentally and economically cataclysmic.

2.Those of us who have internalised it now have a word for it – **The Great Grief.** We regret the loss and potential loss of all that has created a glorious and miraculous world.

3. We need all present solutions and many new ones. Our solutions are not to ignore our future but be part of LIFE

4. We work with all solutions big and small according to our concerns and passions and this is opportunity and where we are.

The accelerating fear creates a **need** and readiness to hear and to act.

SLIDE 2: The readiness is sharpest in developing countries where people live closer to precarious essentials.

It is a growing pressure on governments, and in social movements. See how governments are being pressured for a positive result from the Paris talks in November.

CONTENT: Let's look at the solid and enduring content in the PDC.

This content is a great gift to us and to the whole world: its soils, plants, animals and people. It teaches us how to repair soils, clean waters, regrow forests, integrate agriculture and build our cities and towns so future generations can enjoy a better quality of life than we have had with too much. It provokes a deep appreciation of Life's processes.

SLIDE 3: Alba's

The content is beautiful and teaches us how to see and interpret the natural world – its degradation and building up processes. We teachers are constantly in awe and aware how it has served the tumultuous forty years since it was given to us. Content by indices of success. Drawing: Alba Texeidor.

I hold the permaculture curriculum with its ability to repair ecosystems and human societies is sacred knowledge. I love the way the curriculum grows in depth, and possibility, the more I work with it. Every part of the curriculum has been proven accurate and strongly substantiated by the evidence from across the globe and across time.

This content is my generation's gift to the future generations

So overall, how adequate is the permaculture content for a future with issues unforeseen when David and Bill put permaculture together?

Some parts of the syllabus have grown and flourished in new ways and a few are new, although hinted at, were largely unforeseeable in 1970s such as the acceleration of climate change impacts.

Many issues result from climate change such as ocean rise and marine permaculture, forest regeneration, island and coastal permaculture, megapoli cities of 20+m, and mass movement of people around the world.

We need your thinking about these. What should the curriculum be? What can

and should our teachers teach? Here's quite a long list I comprised for what could be covered more thoroughly, or needed in the future.

- Work with social 'swarm' movements such as perma-occupy
- Financial crises, slow money, perma-money, alternative economies
- Non-violent communication (NVC) and giving useful feedback
- Mariculture, and coastal protection repair strategies
- Rehabilitation of degraded rivers and replenish aquifers
- Strategies for megacities with over 20 million people
- Disaster planning, especially for islands and coastal settlements

The original six Diploma disciplines tended to focus on design and education.

Let's expand the other disciplines: media, community development, ethical finance, design implementation, and strengthen them with networks which enable and resource original areas and new:

- Dana Wilson wants a worldwide network of permaculture media people
- Lis Bastian has launched The Big Fix.com a solutions based website
- Nick and Thomas, university accountancy lecturers, are working with accountants and bankers
- PIRN is providing methods and results of collating permaculture research
- Six people at an IPC edge event are launching Designed Disaster Resilience workshops and training materials for teachers and communities for several world biomes.

And you know others.

We need the networks for permaculturists in formal training institutions, those in relief and development, others in transition and the many progeny of permaculture.

We are getting ready for **accelerated succession** of permaculture because of our first waves of pioneers and we developed two super effective processes: the network and infiltration.

THE PROCESSES

Let us see how permaculture moved across the world and has become so successful.

Bill and David began with the content. They were drawn in by a need and vacuum. We were then drawn in.

Our dispersal lineage is a very long one. We go out into the plaza, the market place, the community centre, and the carport, and even in hospitals!

A little aside. One of my students couldn't attend because she had a chemotherapy

appointment so we went with her and set up the butcher's paper and carried on while the doctors administered her chemo.

We just started. Carried to the 'marketplace' by anyone impassioned enough to do so, teachers, gardeners, community development workers were the first pioneers.

We all teach. We are in the tradition of Confucius, Mahatma Ghandi, Socrates, Friere, Jeanne d'Arc.

We are committed, sometimes we abandon comfortable other lives to pursue this one. And we are usually happy.

No organisation or executive or leader sent us out to plant the seed. There was no organisation.

We were **random pollinators**, mainly teachers, who with a magic curriculum, courage and perseverance launched ourselves. Like explorers we confidently went out there and the results were unpredictable and astounding. Many of you are here today. We are alike in all of us saying "YES" to life.

SUCCESS: What this brilliant trio, Need, Content and Process created

The success of the permaculture course can be attributed, in a large part, to the teachers: those who have taught the students who have become the teachers who have taught the students; moving in an exponential way spreading the teaching and learning and translating it into effective practice. And the permaculture mothers went into schools to make gardens.

They birthed such offspring as GEN, community and school gardens, divestment campaigns, forest gardens, relief and development, transition towns. You can think of more. Some are more embedded than others. Some required more communication and resourcing.

Did they teach the same thing to the same people in the same way?

Were they 'credited' or approved by institutes or governments?

Was their curriculum approved?

What do we call this result: dispersal, diaspora, migration, a web, movement or scattering? Certainly it is a network and its nodes and dispersal links are random and have taken root all over the world. It has given created ancestors and descendants. It founded us.

And who are we: a family, clan, tribe, dynasty, movement, wave, storm, mycelium, or web, or a pod of permaculturists?

Our pattern is our strength

2 SLIDES – FE and NFE

What would happen if people wanted to suppress us for some reason? Because we are a People's Movement and move with freedom and simplicity according to our passions, concerns and invitations we simply show up somewhere else.

Most permaculture is in our heads and hands. It can't really be controlled by forms of censorship.

There aren't many books and materials to be removed and if there were, we would continue anyway.

Look at the network diagram and then the branching one. The pattern we evolved has been our strength. What would have happened if we had chosen the dendritic? branching, pattern?

Dendritic is characterised in formal education as:

- Top down
- Fixed curriculum
- Difficult to change
- Has invisible walls

Networks are characterised (as shown for non-formal education) as:

- Egalitarian
- Open to new concepts/ideas
- Can evolve to meet changing conditions
- Equality of experience and authority

Posters by Alba Teixidor

And we grew through the pattern of growth, evolution and responsiveness. This is the multi-directional network. We knew it intuitively.

Our pattern is networks and we, teachers, researchers, innovators, everyone who is active in permaculture are the links and the content is the nodes. We are fluid, moving any direction and across boundaries drawn in by attraction to a vacuum or imbalance.

Look at our heritage. Bill taught while David tested the content rigorously by producing tested integrated models. Both created nodes – one of curriculum and the other of models.

This is a sketch of where we are today.

SLIDE: Dana's Web

Some put down roots in towns and nations and help them grow.

Some broke new ground.

As founders and adapters they seeded permaculture in nations and supported them, going to Chile, Nepal, Cuba or Spain, Viet Nam and East Timor. John Nzira went to Soweto You know others..

Their progeny are teams working with experience and solutions.

They became the next wave of pioneers who opened up new ground and/or consolidated our existing knowledge. Their impetus is working to reduce the 'mess'.

A little aside. *In this tradition, Paula Paananen is now on a remote island in the Solomon Islands working on solutions with villagers who must move as the ocean rises. Some of you gave to this work in the crowd funding. The results will be the basis of a model, we hope, for other coastal and island communities in danger of being swept away.*

Some deepen our curriculum knowledge through testing, adapting, stretching and developing topics. They rigorously examine the adequacy of content in permaculture courses and provide the detail that enables implementation.

Emerging new nodes in this tradition of **providing 'grunt' and depth** to the curriculum topics are: grasslands, woodlands, food forests, kitchen gardens and permaculture in schools.

Some absorb from the outside such as Sepp Holzer's work in Austria and Peter Andrew's work to restore rivers in Australia. They add regional strategies such as Hugel beds and cell grazing.

Sometimes a topic/node floats away and is only lightly linked to its permaculture parents, founding new, independent nodes. We have in-depth groups and even conferences on Transition Towns, GEN, Eco-cities and ethical money.

The **next wave are the local visionaries** who found permaculture in organisations such Scouts and Guides in Cameroon and East Timor, Agriculture and Women's departments in Viet Nam and Cambodia. NGOs in Albania, Orphanages in Uganda, Education in Malawi

They all teach whether by example, specialised courses or PDCs.

The dispersal and germination of permaculture continues. You, in this room today, whether permaculture trained or not, will have some gleanings from the permaculture movement. Society often does not know of its permaculture origins.

The process of permaculture is teaching through networks. And there is another process.

We infiltrate.

Here is my story, greatly truncated and it's about infiltration and networks. It is more like guerrilla planting. Some results make your heart swell and your eyes tear up. Otherswell they didn't germinate.

In Hong Kong refugee camp a project backfired.

In **Cambodia** women trainers in the Department of Women's Affairs learned permaculture, and then learned centred education. They went out into the villages and from the market places and under houses they taught the villagers.

But first, and this is an important but, they spent six months proving it works in their own gardens and then used it for teaching the farmers through site visits where talked about design and implementation.

SLIDE: Cambodian woman farmer and extension worker

We don't know how many farmers in Cambodia practice permaculture and we would like them here today. We know it is thousands.

In **Viet Nam**, I was not allowed to teach until the National Peoples' Committee of the communist party of VN had approved the first course. So they sent department heads of many disciplines. Learner-centred teaching caused a bit of irritation.

"You are the visiting expert, you tell us". How could I? I didn't know what they knew. And they were super experienced gardeners over 3000 years. At the end of the course Ong Hanh who queried the facilitation methods said he could now see how much they had all learned.

So that was one of my things.....a teaching method that is learner focused and is a special node in my permaculture life. It aligns perfectly with Care of People.

After that course and with the correct translation of permaculture as *Nong Nhiep Ben Vung* by the National Language watchdog they sent me to VACINA. And the spread of permaculture moved through district agriculturists and women – each teaching farmers and each other. It was placed into institutions as in-service learning. They had not had in-service training before.

At provincial level in were drawn the ingos, and Ingos. Counterparts from World Vision, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, Concern, Danaid, QSA, AFSC, Swissaid, CIDA and SIDA, AusAid in fact almost every overseas service organisation was represented in the flood after doi moi. FAO had their staff trained up to teach half the provinces in VietNam and VACINA the others.

We went then to the most disadvantaged provinces and districts – up the northern border with China, high in the mountains to ethnic minorities; the sandy cyclone battered coastal areas around the 17th parallel; villages still suffering napalm damage and bombed into degraded ecosystems.

Similarly in Cambodia we went to the 'white skirt' zone, no man's land, in Svey Rieng province. Here every living thing had been wiped out. Farmers were just re-occupying a desert land.

The Provincial Women's Department in Pursat who had learned and implemented permaculture sent their trainers to the villages to teach them and my monitoring was watching classes of captivated farmers breathe deeply and respond with hope. This team then moved to other provinces.

Monitoring meant visiting about 100 of them in two year's time and seeing how they had transformed the landscape and quickly become productive. I withdraw once I've finished monitoring. I only plug gaps.

After six months, farmers and trainers solve their problems together.

They are all permaculturists. They are us. There are thousands of farmers in Kandal, Kampong Chhnang, Svieng Rieng and I haven't asked where they have taken their courses recently.

I learned how a visionary in that country/province, town or commune spreads the vision and reality.

We tried model farms but in every case they were subverted – either the wealthy person ended up with them, or the committee used them otherwise, or they had little credibility because they were funded by ‘rich overseas’ which we were. So we returned to asking the trainers to make their own model farms. Then permaculture spread well and equitably.

This way we infiltrated and embedded. Organisations such as Kastom Gadens in Honiara, Permatil in East Timor, Rakai Department of Agriculture in Uganda all have permaculture embedded in their practices and outreach. There are many others.

We don't know how many permaculturists worthy of certificates and diplomas there are in Viet Nam, Cambodia, East Timor, Solomon Island, Ethiopia, Uganda, but we do know they are there. They are our brothers and sisters missing here in London. We know in East Timor at least 800+ farmers have learned permaculture.

These people represent what is perhaps our silent permaculture majority.

I was quickly drawn into a concern with a deep sense of injustice for everyone's right to know about climate change, and how to buffer it through permaculture design. I carry this *'right to know'* today and it keeps me focused on where to place my time and resources. Remember **Fritz Schumaker** *"The best gift to give is useful knowledge."*

Unexpected outcomes

One from Cambodia was the learner-centred education. In Pursat, Kampong Chhnanh and Svey Rieng the head of the provincial department of Womens Affair, Em Ponna, Chamony all trained and practiced learner centred training. When it came to the elections, within one party, because it is a dictatorship – they went out to the districts and communes and used their new methods. So instead of 3% of women being elected to commune councils, 30%+ were. And those three women were elected to the National Parliament of Cambodia.

Where will permaculture not infiltrate?

Infiltration or perhaps is it grafting on? The BMCC has about eight permaculturists on staff. The City of Sydney had several and so do other LGAs. All universities have permaculturists working on their staff; so do schools, colleges, food co-ops, kindergartens and now our tradespeople attend courses. It is excellent when your plumber has permaculture knowledge to recycle greywater through biofilters.

People need back up materials.

I wrote a book in English for people starting permaculture. But in Viet Nam, Cambodia, Albania, the participants had no permaculture material in their languages. That was unjust. So they translated my book and now some write materials in their own languages.

In Cambodia without translators, and many people smart and illiterate, we developed a 'soap' a series of posters telling the story of a family who implemented permaculture and they named all the children, parents and places and participants told the consequences for a family that practices permaculture and a family who did not know how. They took home leaflets with illustrations and a few key words for families and reading matter for their children who were learning. This slightly backfired when they

were often kept locked up in cupboards.

In this tradition in East Timor, Ego Lemos, Lachlan McKenzie and a team produced their permaculture book for the hot, wet tropics which is now being revised. It has been partially translated into Luganda in Uganda. Chris Evans worked with his team to produce local materials for Nepal. You know of more examples.

SLIDE: Tina Also let's celebrate the first Greek translation off the press in Greece this week as a gift from Tina Lymberis to her people. People can now verify what they have been taught.

And here is the cover of a book which you financed and will be freely available to you off the web.

SLIDE Cover of PTM

Why Permaculture is the "BIG" solution?

*"There is not one single solution. There are **seven billion solutions.**"*

There is always an on-going and unsuccessful search in varying forms by the establishment for the BIG solution. Why they cannot find the solution is quite simple. *There is no such thing as THE solution. However there are many, smaller solutions found in our everyday activities*

The following is a brief look at some permaculture success stories.

They are from all sorts of life and backgrounds, across the world, and differing cultures describing their small scale, non-institutionalised, small money, permaculture solutions and how they worked.

SLIDES

- Food security – Rakai orphanage and agriculture department, Uganda, took off under local ownership
- Disaster proofing - the DWA teams in Cambodia
- Sharing/gift economy - Burmese refugees on Thai border, Aylatte
- Importance of education and materials - Ego Lemos, Lachie, Permatil. materials and local trainers
- Vision and hope - Afghan Peace Volunteers permaculture group

If they can, you can

SLIDES: Afghan peace volunteers

How do all these permaculture success stories relate to the "BIG" solution?

Well, because these are permaculture solutions, they are flexible, adaptable to any kind of culture and environment, they are easily scalable and replicable.

THE FUTURE is accelerated succession and the third ethic.

Permaculture is my generation's gift to future generations

We face unprecedented problems that our governments are unready for.

Need is already there. What else exists that complements or challenges permaculture? There are many individual solutions we can use. I can't find anything else that integrates so many disciplines.

What 'edge' permaculture do we have as we face a different world and need different tools?

Basic truths about our survival, and managing risk relate to how well we manage to diversify, innovate and constantly adapt.

We have the elements: processes and the content. The need is pressing and the outreach has proven invaluable and you will find others through the web, on the ground, through new networks and through your passions.

We have 'swarm' movements, unpredictable younglings such as perma-money and perm-occupy among the most extreme, and bankers, university professors in accounting among the most mainstream. Will we be co-opted by governments and defense forces?

We have connexions everywhere in the world, skilled people and examples on the ground with 30+ years of experience. Where could it take us? What will we need to scale up - to accelerate the succession. Acceleration operates through networks.

We face the human rights challenge of our time and history proves that *"when human beings walk together in pursuit of a righteous cause, nothing can resist."*

SLIDE The big challenges

Cities: In the 1950s, the number of people living in cities was **about 750 million**. That is **predicted to hit 5 billion by 2030** the challenge is to transform urban areas so that they offer safe and sustainable places to live for future generations.

- **Learn** micro-scale techniques for abundance
- **Work** with housing blocks as communities
- **Train** their trainers
- **Focus** on small scale protein techniques
- **Increase** capacity of residents

Refugees: a global migration shift. In 2014, 60 m people fled their homes: UN report. The challenge is

- Offer permaculture in their camps, centres, towns
- Restore the lands and towns they fled from

Low coastlands, deltas and islands

- Prepare people to leave through permaculture training

- Help negotiate new lands with permaculture design

Water

- is the element which will be our problem and our joy and possibly our disaster. We must be experts in it
- Too much, too little, too often, too sparse, and will be our challenge.
- This is where we must excel.
- So let's skill up for everything to do with water.

Where do you want to work? What excites you?

A menu of potential areas

- Knowledge and skills for **resilient communities**, permanence, resilience, precautionary principle
- **Recovery** after disturbance, disaster
- Phytoremediation
- **Megacities**: principles for renovation and construction
- Small-scale **protein sources for cities**, e.g. spirulina, aquaponics
- **Evaluate** Transition Towns for bioregional differences
- **Food forest** strategies for Zone II biomes, e.g. tropical and desert
- **Zone III agriculture** more strategies and techniques
- **Indices** for the evaluation of permaculture works/projects
- **Evaluation** of PDC graduates to know what best teachers do

SLIDE How we will do it:

- **Accelerate** the succession of the first waves of pioneers
- **Use media** compellingly, make films, write, argue, support, advocate for, photograph,
- **Stay open** and accepting of positive changes and adapt.
- **Establish** quality of permaculture trainees and see which teachers produce the 'best' permaculturists, and pass it on.
- **Train** more trainers
- **Use** the web, research, do, establish more evidence
- **Find** the best models large, small in every environment and let people know and multiply them.
- **Tackle** the big questions for refugees and urban environments with lightness and creativity.
- **Establish** community models where you live
- **Work with everyone** who is for Life.
- **Just do it**

I see hope and reassurance.

I see that we are not alone,

I see there are many people out there with working solutions and that we can graft on this knowledge and pass hope to the next generation.

You, the next wave of pioneers, have the capacity to solve the challenges of the future and you will enable the next flush of permaculture: the next wave.

"Slavery and apartheid did not end because states decided to abolish them. Mass mobilisation left political leaders no other choice." May Boeve

Our crises we can only solve together. When we teach, write, talk, co-operate, design our homes and gardens and then divest and change starts happening.

We never know how big it will be until it's occurred. We are the alternative and we have forty years experience, the right structures, the right content and we are here at the right time. We have solutions.

We are ready for the next wave of pioneers? You are one of them. We have no choice than all of us. We have started, we know we are for Life. We know our pattern is the best for our times and ages. We weave the ribbons of systemic change.

We love this world and we love Life. So, let us have a vision. Let's multiply these solutions by a billion in a true permaculture way. Let us start right here!

Closing

Could I have seven volunteers from the audience to stand up. Thank you

Please turn to your neighbor, ask them to stand, take their hand and **share** an idea with him/her. Ask them to do the same with their neighbour. Stay standing and holding hands offering their hand and asking them to stand also.

Please each of you share you idea the same way. Soon the whole audience will be standing and holding hands. Finally ask them to raise their hands

Then shout out their idea for moving forward

"There is not one single solution. There are seven billion solutions - and YOU are one of them.

LAST SLIDE Thank you. Go in peace, loving Earth and working for just, restorative solutions.

- Rosemary (Rowe) Morrow,
- September 4, 2015
- IPC, 12, London