

NGOMBOR'S FIRST YEAR

Ngombor means hope



Ngombor is a difficult word to translate.

There is nothing so concise in English, but in Alur, it describes a specific kind of feeling: the sense of hopefulness that comes from persistent effort. It isn't a passive wish; it is the confidence you earn after doing the hard work. Ngombor means having come a long way. For development to take place it must have taken time, hard work, commitment and dedication.

Ngombor means hope.

Our mission and vision:

Rooted in rural Nebbi, Uganda, Ngombor Community Development Alliance is led by local leaders empowering smallholder farmers, women, and youth. We are a community-led movement, blending permaculture, grassroots development, and tech learning.

As part of Ngombor's mission, we want to show that agriculture and technology, white collar jobs and blue collar jobs, city and country, don't need to be in opposition—we can mutually support each other. Thanks to the ability to work remotely, people won't have to leave their families and land to be programmers and participate in the global stage.

At the heart of this work is Ngombor permaculture model farm.

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A NOTE FROM LIZ

You are about to read Ngombor Community Development Alliance's first year. It's a pretty incredible feeling and only exists because a team of wonderful people around the world decided to make it happen. As I've provided financial support to help Ngombor get started, Trust Based Philanthropy has been my guiding principle and celebrates the power of giving people with deep expertise and passion the support to make a difference. Trust Based Philanthropy done right is more work, not less than more restricted funding, because it makes things a conversation rather than a simple mathematical equation.

Through the power of exchange rates, a small amount of my salary, and donors from around the world, I'm so grateful that I've been able to say time and time again, "What do you think is best? What do you want to achieve? What do you want in the budget?" It is incredible to see what Ngombor has been able to do with resources, trust and support.

Permaculture principles are close to our heart. When things get tough or turn out unexpectedly, it is nice to think of the abundant diversity and curiosity of this sustainable framework. Not all experiences produce a yield, but compost is helpful too. In a world that prefers tidy monocultures and manicured lawns, we can show the abundance that comes with listening, working with diverse energies to create multi-layered food forests.

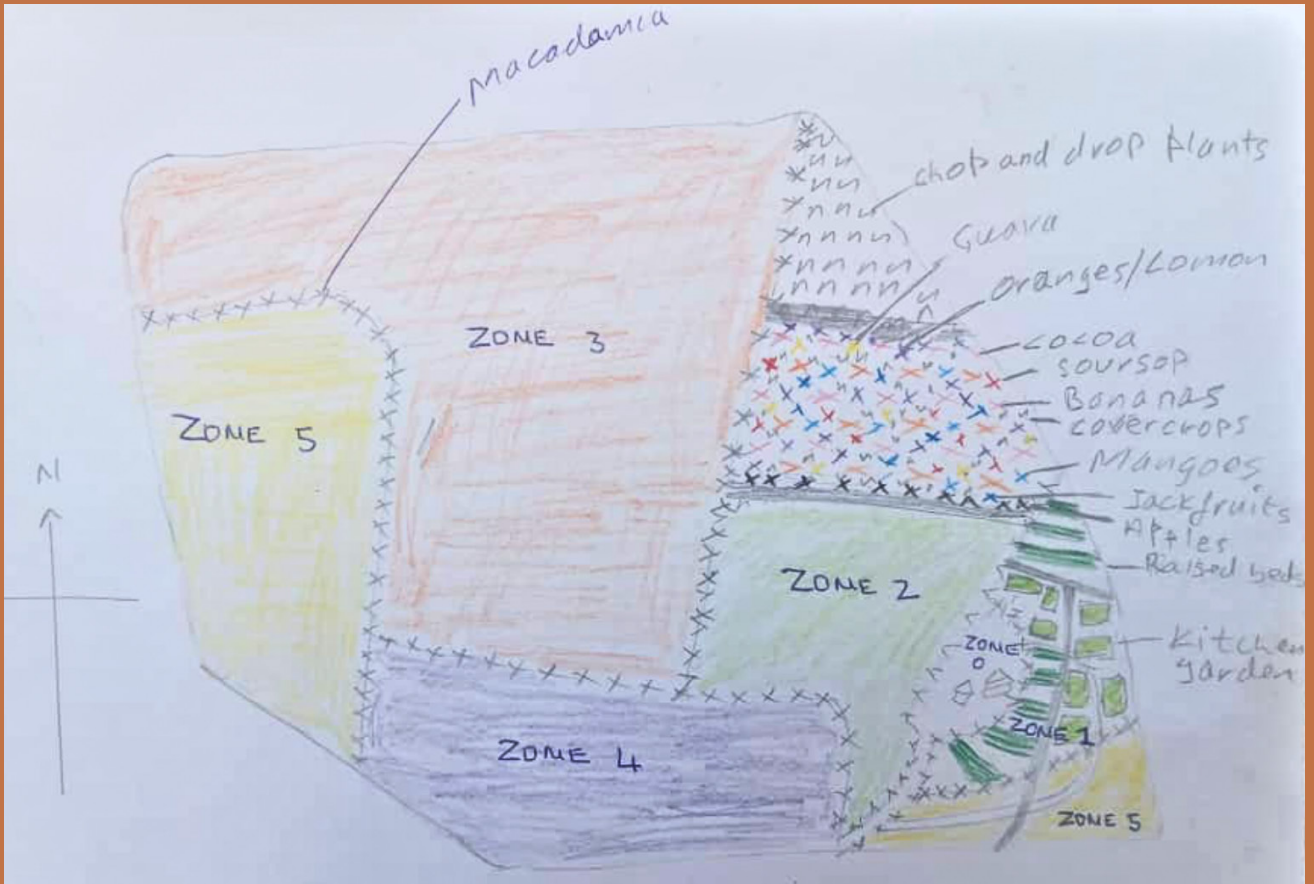
We have a whole lot of plans for this year, from further farm construction, tree planting, running educational workshops and our IT development program. We also have some important grant writing to do this year as too many people in Nebbi district don't have access to clean drinking water. I love that we have a deep team, with lots of expertise. It's not just one person, or two people or three, it's a community of women and men (30 active members strong at the time of printing) and that's why we can do so much in such diverse areas.

Ngombor is building a food forest, but I think the greatest food forest is the community we are building with each other. Thank you for being part of our biome.

Liz Argall
Co-founder



Ngombor 2025



THE FARM

Ngombor isn't a "project location" selected by a distant board. It is a homegrown reality rooted in the soil of Nebbi. The entire 20-acre site was historically dismissed as "rubbish land"; soil deemed too degraded for farming. But where others saw land unfit for much, Vincent Ulargiw saw potential and the ability to give others the joy he experienced as a boy on his grandfather's farm.

Founded by Vincent and run entirely by local community members, the vision and labor originate here. Our international volunteers serve as the scaffolding; providing the resources to help a local vision scale, but never directing it from afar.

Zone 0-1 (Tended to daily):

The heart of the farm, featuring the newly constructed main house, water tank, and kitchen garden.

Zone 2 (Food forest):

A living laboratory where we established 150+ fruit trees this year.

Zone 3 (Occasionally visited):

This type zone can contain things like large fruit and nut trees, pasture, or cash crops. Zone 3 is not yet being actively developed.

Zone 4 (Managed forest):

We are restoring the ecosystem with 2,000 Teak trees and 300 White Teak/Eucalyptus varieties, turning degraded soil into a long-term asset.

Zone 5 (Deliberately unmanaged):

Wilderness zone, foraging, inspiration, meditation

In addition to the farm itself, an acre of land is farmed collectively by community members as a cash crop.

IT DEVELOPMENT

Currently our IT development work is conducted in Nebbi town. Long term we want to host IT development activities at the farm, but the farm needs electricity and a few other amenities. Our IT ambitions aren't new. Long before Ngombor, Co-Founder Vincent Ulargiw ran Nazaire Enterprise, an internet café where he taught basic computer skills to over 100 people over the ten last years and helped other internet cafes in the region get their start.

Right now we run IT literacy meetups and are just starting with some more advanced learning.

YEAR ONE HIGHLIGHTS: Building the Foundation



January 2025: Beginnings

Jan. 25: After many years of planning and dreaming, Vince asks Liz for help founding a permaculture model farm. He has 20 acres of land people think is completely unsuited for farming.



March 2025:
Community comes together

March 25: Community leaders form Ngombor's founding committee. They determine Ngombor's constitution and draft a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for community members to use his land. Ngombor is formally incorporated.



April 2025: Tech,
agriculture & equity

April 25: Four team members traveled from Nebbi to Kampala for the PyLadies Monthly Meetup. This trip underscored two core values: that technology is a vital tool for agriculture, and that women belong at the forefront of that revolution. Someone who had never touched a computer could immediately connect Data Science to successful agriculture. Tracking seeds, rainfall, and harvest yields is just as important for a farmer as it is for a developer.

“ I have a growing passion for IT because I believe it's a powerful tool for solving real-life problems, improving communities, and creating new opportunities. ”

—Gloria, student



*May 2025:
A powerful training*

June 25: Before international fundraising fully ramped up, our community members stepped up. Community members donated 5,500,000 UGX (\$1,500 USD) and construction on the farm house and gardens was able to begin.

May 25: Two team members completed a Permaculture Designer Course (PDC) with Permaculture Uganda. The knowledge they gained around farm design, nursery beds, water retention, honoring indigenous knowledge and learning the philosophy of permaculture was powerful. After two weeks of hands-on learning our participants didn't pause to rest, but immediately started work on the farm.



*June 2025:
Community buy-in*



*August 2025: Infrastructure
and sweat equity*

August 25: We finished the Main House roof and installed the water tank just as the region entered one of the worst droughts on record with only 60% of estimated rainfall. The community mobilized to carry jerrycans by hand from the seasonal well—saving the food forest and some of the crops through physical resilience and smart water capture designs.



September 2025:
Crisis response

September 25: When our on-site farm attendant was hospitalized with typhoid and malaria, the local volunteers hand-quarried stone on-site and built a solid brick outhouse latrine. We turned a health crisis into a permanent infrastructure upgrade.

November 25: The Nebbi District Local Government donated 1,000 tree seedlings and Napier grass stocks. This was a powerful vote of confidence, validating that our reforestation work is aligned with regional goals.



November 2025:
Government recognition

“ Look at the beans, they are very healthy. I couldn't imagine this soil doing great like this. I am sorry I ever lamented that you were wasting time planting things on this dry stoney land. I have to copy this to my similar stony land. ”
—Community member



February 2026:
Goat house construction

February 26: The chicken coop and goat house have been constructed. Our first international guests arrive and we have our first celebration. It's been one heck of a year!



February 2026:
Kuckwing cultural group



March 2026:
2 donated laptops

March 26: As the second growing season begins, the community gathers on Wednesdays to work on the collective cash crop. Simultaneously, thanks to two donated laptops and an inspiring remote teacher we are able to push into more advanced topics.



March 2026:
A growing season



above: Vince helps build a raised garden bed during Permaculture Uganda PDC training.
right: Local villagers that came to Ngombor's first celebration from Uyuthu and surrounds. They asked to have their photo taken. They wanted to be seen.

INNOVATION & RESILIENCE: Why Ngombor is important

Nebbi district faces considerable challenges—recovering from the effects of the LRA insurgency and recent conflicts in DR Congo, climate change, and the isolation and discrimination that comes with living in Northern Uganda.

Refugees and orphans: An impoverished community still cares

Driven by the CODECO insurgency in the DR Congo, many Alur people have crossed into Uganda seeking safety. Rather than gathering in camps, they find refuge within the local community.

- **Taking care of extended family:**

In a profound act of solidarity, many families absorb refugees and orphans directly into their households. This approach preserves dignity and avoids the isolation of institutional camps.

- **Hidden strain:**

Because there are no visible tent cities, aid organizations often overlook the region. The community bears the cost of this care, stretching already limited food and resources.

- **Vital support:**

Contributions directly strengthen this safety net, funding essential infrastructure like wells and food in an area of strong need.





Nursery garden bed. Donated teak and eucalyptus seedlings, jackfruit and kei apple seedlings.

Climate reality: The 2025 drought

The “Short Rains” of 2025 were some of the driest on record. While the district saw widespread crop wilting, we mobilized to hand-carry water from the seasonal well to keep the kitchen garden alive. The result:

- **Thriving biodiversity:**

We proved the land’s potential by successfully growing 15+ distinct vegetable varieties in a season where local monocultures failed.

- **Protection:**

We raised 3,000 Kei Apple seedlings to create live-fencing that secures the farm.

- **Nursery beds:**

We raised vegetable and jackfruit seedlings not just for our farm, but to share amongst our community members.

Economics: Money stays here

We aren’t just growing food; we are building an economy.

- **Circular revenue:**

Despite terrible drought conditions the community acre generated **465,000 UGX (\$131 USD)** in 2025.

- **The multiplier:**

100% of this profit was injected into the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) part of Ngombor. This capital means members can take short term loans for things like having the capital to buy fish in one region and sell it in another. Building their ability to earn income and to get food to more people.

VINCE ON PERMACULTURE

The Permaculture Designer training reminded me that everything in this world is interconnected. We need to live in harmony to save the environment. Farmers need to be educated on how to kindly ask the soil for what they need, rather than forcing it to give them what they want.

By changing our approach, we can significantly minimize environmental degradation and the loss of soil fertility, saving the environment for future generations. It is crucial to understand that harsh farming methods have accelerated environmental degradation and global warming.

Permaculture is the best path forward if we are to save what is left of our environment. Permaculture taught me that many resources are wasted unknowingly in traditional farming:

- **Grass:** Instead of burning the grass cleared when opening land, it should be used for mulching.
- **Water:** Rainwater is often left to run off the farm. Instead, we should tap it using swales to allow it to be absorbed by the soil, or gather it in bunds for irrigation.
- **Waste:** Animal and human waste is often just disposed of. Instead, it should be used as manure to improve yields and feed the soil organisms that are vital for the health of the land.

At Ngombor, we intend to train as many smallholder farmers as possible to adopt these permaculture principles. By doing so, they can improve their crop yields, harvesting enough food to feed their families while selling the surplus to improve their livelihoods.

To learn more about permaculture, see Kate Webb's write-up on page 31.



Vince holds two Acoga (carissa edulis) seedlings that were planted in the food forest.

WINNY'S STORY: PERMACULTURE TRAINING

What an experience! My mindset about farming changed in just 72 hours of PDC (Permaculture Design Course) training at Butambala.

I have been a Community Development Worker for over 10 years. Throughout my experience as a change agent, I have been preaching to my community about the need to practice agriculture, which is the backbone of our country's economy. I promoted it as a way to enhance food security as well as improve livelihoods, especially when farming for both home consumption and for sale.

However, as much as I preached that message, I had never developed an interest in personally engaging in farm work. My negative attitude toward farming changed during the days we were at Butambala for the PDC. When I reflected on my meager salary, I realized that if I engage in farming, I will definitely change my story.

After completing the training, I decided to begin practicing the knowledge I obtained. I put up a small kitchen garden with raised heaps, applied mulching, and dug contours to catch rainwater to be absorbed into the soil. I also set up a nursery bed and planted tomatoes, eggplants, and other vegetables.

Although there was no rainfall this month, I and members of my family have been watering the plants. I have also made a decision to grow cassava, ground nuts, and rice in the next season, as the garden is already being prepared. It should be noted, however, that these personal activities will not interfere with the activities of Ngombor in any way.

Secondly, as a way of preserving energy, I have always encouraged my community to conserve and protect the environment through the use of energy-saving stoves made out of mud. Yet, I had never made any in my own home—until now. Thrilled by the PDC training, I took the initiative to become exemplary and constructed one with three holes in my home.

It is exciting to note that even this change of mind has amazed my family members, including my children. Actually, even my own children were surprised to see me dig when I shared the photos from Butambala with them and they saw me busy in my kitchen garden. I believe I can now talk to the community through demonstration as well as being an exemplary leader, which I am sure will create more impact.



Winny with an energy efficient mud stove the group constructed during PDC training.

STRONGER TOGETHER



above: *There was music and dancing for many hours at Ngombor's first celebration.*

right: *Getting ready to install the water tank.*

Owning our story

Every video, blog post, and photo you see from Ngombor is recorded by the team on the ground in Nebbi. We don't rely on visitors to document our lives; we do it ourselves.

- **A historic celebration:**

On February 9, 2026, we hosted our first major community celebration, welcoming friends David LaMotte and Chinobay.

- **Culture and joy:**

The day was filled with music, drumming, and dancing—a powerful reminder that development is not just about survival, but about joy and cultural pride.

- **Watch the journey:**

You can see this celebration, recorded entirely by our local team, on our YouTube channel: [youtube.com/@Ngombor](https://www.youtube.com/@Ngombor)



Community and financials

- **Local buy-in:**

Our first local donations proved that our community believes in this work.

- **Global solidarity:**

International donors provided the capital for the “big ticket” items—the water tank, the roof, floors, windows and doors that made the Main House a safe place to sleep.

MEET THE TEAM

Here are a few of the folks helping to create Ngombor.



Vincent Ulargiw, Secretary and Founder

Vincent is a graduate of Democracy and Development Studies from Uganda Martyrs University, a Diploma in Social Work and certificates in Strategic Procurement and Logistics Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, Public Administration and Management, and Entrepreneurship and Business Skills. He is a certified permaculture designer.

He was the founding coordinator of a training school that started by providing sewing skills training and resources to women escaping difficult circumstances in DR Congo. He brought the first internet cafe to Nebbi and runs a business service.



Lekuru Winny Hope, Treasurer

Winny is a Community Development Officer with Nebbi District Local Government. She holds a degree in Social Work and Social Administration, a postgraduate diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation.

Winny previously worked as a Child Sponsorship Assistant with World Vision and is a certified permaculture designer.



Laurine Afoyorwoth, Chairperson

Laurine is a smallholder farmer and Village Health Team Coordinator for Jupuwiny Village. She serves as Coordinator for Ratuk Parish, Chairperson for the Mungu Neno Group, and Mobiliser for the Goro Nwengi Wi Tegini group.



Ofoyrwoth Cosma, Youth Coordinator

With a long standing interest in IT and a certificate in Computer Applications, Cosma is committed to using his skills, experience, and passion to drive positive change and empower young people in his community. His leadership skills have been honed through various roles, including serving as Secretary for Youth in his village, Chairperson for Youth in Namthin Ward, and Vice Chairperson for Youth in Central Division, Nebbi Municipality.



Adjolorwoth Justin, Volunteer Farm Attendant

Adjolo is a subsistence farmer who volunteers to live on-site at the Ngombor farm. He provides the security and labor necessary to develop the land.

Adjolo came to Uganda in 2012 when the violent CODECO militia were going from village to village killing people (CODECO’s violence reached their heights in 2020-2023 with multiple large scale massacres and crimes against humanity). Vince’s mother hosted Adjolo and his family. While Adjolo’s parents have returned, this part of DR Congo is still a conflict zone. Adjolo stayed, as many have, and has been absorbed into the community.

International supporters:

Liz Argall, Co-founder

Based in the USA, Liz is a technical writer and cartoonist. She spent a decade in the nonprofit sector, including governance consulting for the ACT Council of Social Service. Her late father, Dennis Argall, was friends with Vincent for twenty years.

Kate Webb, Permaculture Consultant

Based in the USA, Kate is a Salesforce Specialist with an Urban Permaculture Design certificate from the Planet Repair Institute. She specializes in water systems, hydroponics, and aquaculture.

Lucy Mitchell, Consultant and Writer

Lucy is a Documentation Engineer for Kraken based in the UK. They have experience working with rural community leaders, urban community gardens, food co-ops, and community kitchens.

LOOKING AHEAD



Fetching drinking water from a seasonal well.

“ During the dry season people line up for as long as six hours, or even more, waiting to fetch water. Sharon (a community member) says she went to fetch water at 5am and came back at 12pm because the line was too long and she is not the only one that goes through the same strain every single day. ”

— Vincent K. Ulargiw

2026 Goals

- **Water security:**

Moving from rain-harvesting to drilling a deep well so we aren't dependent on the weather and can provide drinking water to our neighbors.

- **Feeding our neighbors:**

Provide communal meals and permaculture training so that we can support our neighbors in the now and help them feed themselves in the future.

- **Training facilities:**

Improving Ngombor's on-site facilities so that we can offer more trainings and different types of training

- **Global connection:**

Building a stronger international volunteer base to support our storytelling, grant writing, and technical needs.



Ngombor's first celebration.

Current needs: Building and sustaining

To hit our 2026 goals, we have a two-pronged strategy:

1. BUILDING THE FUTURE (CAPITAL CAMPAIGN)

We are raising funds for one-time expenses: drilling the deep-water well, getting solar, building a cow shelter, and purchasing IT equipment.

- **Support the future:** gofundme.com/f/support-ngombors-sustainable-future

2. FEEDING THE PRESENT (THE “SHARED MEAL”)

In a region facing food insecurity, consistent support is vital. We are looking for sustaining monthly donors to help us host Community Meals and Training Days at least once a month.

- **The need:**

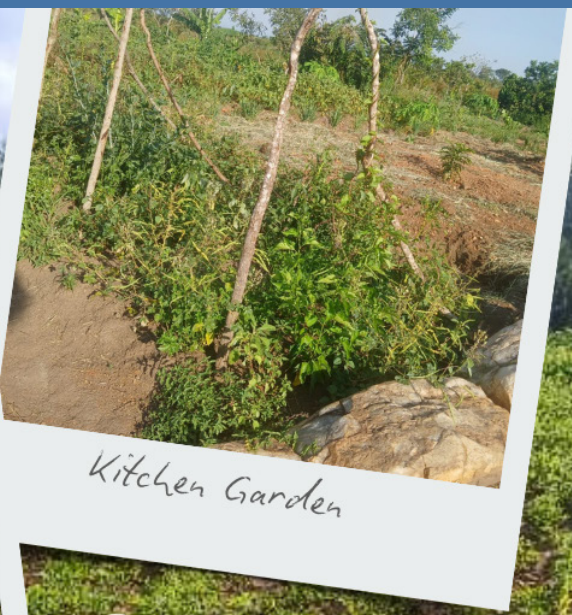
\$200/month allows us to feed the broader community near Uyuthu village.

- **The impact:**

This covers breakfast and lunch for attendees, sandwiched around a training session on permaculture. It creates a space for cultural preservation (song and dance) and allows parents to learn new skills while children play in safety.



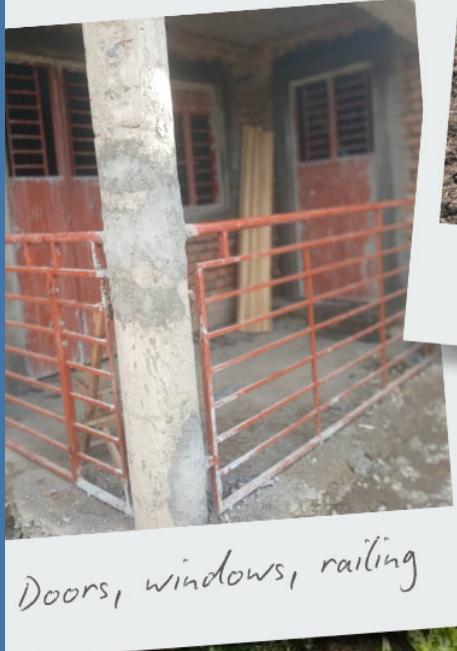
Bananas



Kitchen Garden



Chicken coop construction



Doors, windows, railing



Paw paw

NGOMBOR'S END OF YEAR REPORT FOR 2025

Get into the details, direct from the on the ground team, Ngombor's end of Year Report for 2025.

Background

Ngombor Community Development Alliance (NGOCDA) is a registered, non-profit organization based in Nebbi District, North West Uganda, focused on establishing a sustainable permaculture model farm and fostering community-led development. Founded in 2025, we aim to empower local communities through sustainable agriculture. We have a vision to create an empowered and prosperous community in greater Nebbi, in North West Uganda. We are committed to fostering holistic rural community development through community engagement and innovation.

Permaculture

During our first year 2025 we planned to increase participation of the unprivileged in agricultural production, putting our main focus on the Permaculture system of farming, with the aim of increasing food security among the small holder farmers. To achieve all this, we sponsored two people to attend a Permaculture Design Course (PDC), which is a 72-hour intensive certificate training program that teaches the principles and practices of permaculture design. It is an internationally recognized credential. Those who complete it are legally and internationally authorized to use the word permaculture for individual and commercial purposes. The course equips individuals with the knowledge and skills to design sustainable systems that mimic natural ecosystems. This was the first and vital phase in beginning to understand the development and practicing of permaculture ethics, principles, design, and implementation techniques. After fully completing the course, the participants are recognized as Permaculture Graduates and therefore able to design and manage their own or community permaculture farm or could further apply for a Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design.

IT development

We held a sponsored activity that enabled two men and two women to go to a PyLadies meetup in Kampala. It takes a day to go from Nebbi to Kampala by bus, so this was a powerful opportunity to overcome some of the isolating challenges rural communities face. PyLadies is an international mentorship group with a focus on helping more women to become active participants and leaders in the Python open-source community. Their mission is to promote, educate and advance a diverse Python community through outreach, education, conferences, events, and social gatherings. With IT involved, we plan to show how agriculture, community, and technological development do not need to be in opposition. We aim to undo the colonial mindset that you must live in an urban area and have strictly white-collar jobs to live a successful life. In a digital age, people should not have to leave their communities to access knowledge, connection, and opportunities. Effective use of technology will be essential for navigating a changing climate, and building opportunities for people who have been marginalized.

After we got the experience from PyLadies Uganda, we started our own weekly meetups in which young women and men are learning basic IT literacy. Out of the several meetups that we have had so far, the participants are all content and happy about it. We intend to expand this to reach the rural unprivileged communities who would have no chance of learning IT.

To develop the skills further, we also have weekly online IT skill training. This one goes deeper than the literacy classes as it focuses and covers professional skill development for people who already have prior knowledge of IT.

Community mobilized and sensitized in permaculture

During the year 2025 we were able to mobilize the community and form a community-based organization in the name of **Ngombor Community Development Alliance**. This organization is now duly registered with Nebbi District Local Government and Kucwiny Sub County which makes its operations legally recognized. After registration, we opened a bank account through which all the financial transactions of the organization are managed.

The mission of the organization is to create an empowered and prosperous community through local initiatives. Our main focus will be on imparting permaculture principles for sustainable food chain, improve income and diversify livelihoods of the community, improve resilience to climate change, and promote saving culture through a Village Savings and Loan scheme. Hence sustainable community development.

Establish an integrated permaculture demonstration centre

With the PDC training attended, the initial process of opening the Permaculture Model Farm promptly started by designing and creating the farm beginning with zone 0, 1, 2 and 4. Zone 0 being the residential area, zone 1 being kitchen garden area while zone 2 is the food forest and zone 4 is the semi wild (artificial forest) area meant to produce firewood, timber and poles for construction.

Activities in Zone 0

Construction of our first residential structure in zone 0 was started and essential construction completed. We were able to raise the walls, roof it, construct the ceiling, pour concrete on floor, fix the metallic windows and doors. The water from the roof is being harvested in a water tank which is used for domestic consumption. The tank, if filled up, can be used for nearly 2 months in the absence of rain.

The construction of a pit latrine is complete, and it is now in use though the doors

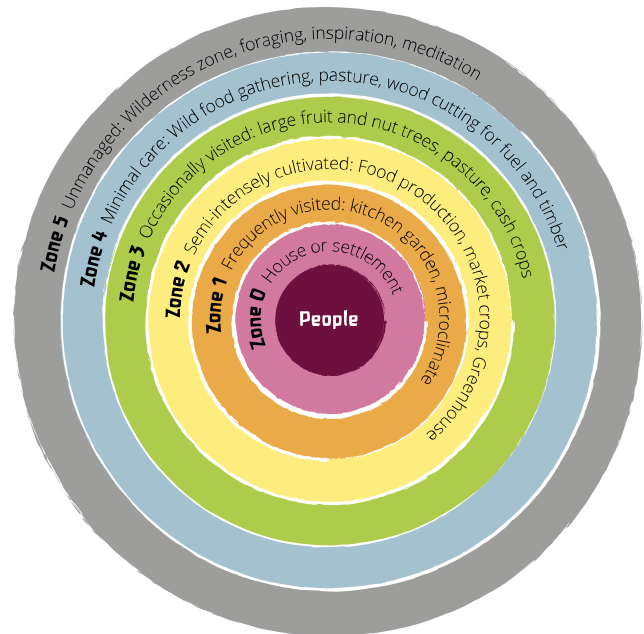


Illustration: Felix Müller (www.zukurift-selbermachen.de) Licence: CC-BY-SA 4.0

are not yet fixed. The latrine is constructed in such a way that the waste collects in a pit where it's mixed with sawdust, and then later on used as manure. The sawdust is helpful in minimizing the smell as well as in decomposing wastes so that by the time of removal it is ready for use.

The chicken house is under construction, it will have 3 rooms. One is for local chicken and guinea fowl that will be on semi free range; this means that in addition to their feed they are able to browse on their own for other natural feeds like insects, grass, and worms. The second room will be for turkey that will also be kept on semi free-range. The third room will be for cockerel, these will be kept indoors and sold off on maturity.

Meanwhile we have purchased timber offcuts to be used for the construction of a goat pen. The pen will be raised 1 meter above the ground so that their droppings and urine can be collected and used as manure in the garden. This also further prevents hygiene-related infections.

Zone 1

During this year we were able to create our kitchen garden in which green vegetable like ndera (malabar spinach), nakati (Ethiopian eggplants/bitter tomato/garden eggs), alagi (hibiscus), akeyo (African spider plant), alwaru (sun hemp), sukuma wiki (collard greens) usungina (pigeon peas),

nyanya (tomatoes), dodo (amaranth/African spinach), carrots, cabbages, and watermelon.

Some of these greens were shared with Ngombor group members as well as the surrounding community, who kept coming to ask for a pick. We are certain that impact from our kitchen garden will spill over to the surrounding community as many are now intending to create their own kitchen gardens. This quote from Ulargiw K. Vincent can tell how much impact our work has created: *“to start with, people thought we were very strange, but now people are able to pick green vegetables from the kitchen garden. We now plan to erect a dryer and make more seeds so that we can distribute the seeds to people around so that they can have their own kitchen garden.”*

Zone 2

In zone 2 we created swales and planted various fruits; over 150 fruits were planted. The types that we planted include nefle (medlar), muchunguwa (oranges), adunde (soursop/graviola/guanabana), rab-olo (bananas), avoka (avocados), fene (jackfruits), macadamia, ndimo (lemon), mangu (mangoes), and gishta/qishta (sugar apple/sweetsop).

To improve the soil health by adding nitrogen, we planted beans in the food forest. The harvest was not so good but at least we are happy for the contributions the beans have added to the soil. The output was affected due to the extended and unexpected dry season that stretched for over 2 months.

Zone 4

Prior to the idea of a permaculture model farm, we had already planted 1500 teak trees in the area now portioned for zone 4. In 2025 Nebbi District Local Government offered us 1000 seedlings. 200 were distributed to group members and we were able to plant 500 more teak, 200 eucalyptus, and 100 white teak making the total trees now planted to be 2300 in Zone 4.

The local government also donated three sacks of Napier grass which we planted. Napier grass takes about a year to

establish itself, it restores the earth and is a perennial that can be harvested to make feed for livestock.

Nursery bed area

From our nursery we were able to produce some 200 jackfruits that we distributed to the group members. We also raised over 3000 kei apple seedlings that we hope to plant in the next season which begins in March. Kei apples will be planted in hedges to create natural fencing.

Community garden/VSLA

Apart from the farm activities, the group members of Ngombor Community Development Alliance planted cabbages, eggplants, green paper, okra, tomatoes, and onions in the community garden; these crops were highly affected by the inadequate rain that prevailed last season, which gravely affected the output. The following is the income projection from the crops against actual income that was realized in Ugandan Shillings.

The money received from the sales of the produce has been injected into the savings and loan scheme to be borrowed by members at low interest.

In the savings and loan scheme, each member contributes UGX 1,000 per week. This money together with the return from sales of crop is used as a revolving fund for the group members. Registered members borrow money from the group account at a very low interest rate to support their various ventures. Some members use the money for local business while others use the money for farming. This has brought a lot of positive changes into the lives of members. This can be seen from how timely the members pay back and how they are able to express how they have benefited from the scheme.

Challenges

Being our first year of operation from inception, we have gone through a series of challenges and setbacks which we appreciate to be an opportunity for learning and

Crop	Income Projection	Actual Income	Approx USD
Cabbages	1,000,000	-	
Eggplants	500,000	70,000	\$20
Green Paper	300,000	50,000	\$14
Okra	300,000	70,000	\$20
Tomatoes	700,000	150,000	\$42
Onions	500,000	125,000	\$35
Total		465,000	\$131

experience, and we have learnt a lot from it. Some of the challenges that we experienced are as below:

– *Inadequate rain and inconsistencies in weather changes.* This is majorly due to global warming which is one of the challenges that permaculture principles seek to address

– *Bush fire.* Culturally the Alur people believe in burning bushes during dry season with the major reason of clearing the bush for easy hunting, and to get fresh grass for grazing. This culture has been rooted so deeply that it is taking time to sensitize the community on how important it is not to burn bushes.

– *Water.* There are limited sources of water for domestic use, for animals as well as for watering plants. This situation is even worse especially during the dry season when all the unsafe shallow wells dry up. During the dry season people line up for as long as 6 hours, or even more, waiting to fetch water. Sharon (a community member) says she went to fetch water at 5am and came back at 12pm because the line was too long and she is not the only one that goes through the same strain every single day.

– *Resources.* Being a young organization, resource mobilization poses a huge barrier; this ranges from finances to human resources, seeds/seedlings, equipment, tools, etc.

Mitigation

– In an effort to balance the inadequacy of rainfall and inconsistent weather we endeavored to water the crops, especially

fruits and kitchen garden. We also dug recharge pits to harvest running rain water, we made swales for ground water recharge and we installed a water tank to store water for both domestic use and crop watering. These as well have proven helpful during water scarcity.

– To prevent the dangers of bush burning and wild fire, it is important to keep the grass short and make fire lines along the crops. That is how our trees were able to escape a fire this season.

– In this first year we have been privileged to have the presence of both local and international volunteers who have been so helpful by dedicating their time and other resources to see us reach where we are now.

Way forward

– Community training in permaculture.

– Community support to practice permaculture at household level.

– Community Training on disaster risk management.

– Community support at household level to demonstrate clean energy saving technologies.

– Community leaders and students attend meetups and training opportunities at a national level.

– Computer literacy training.

– IT skills development, training and mutual support.

– Develop multiple income streams to support our endeavors.

NGOMBOR FINANCIALS 2025

DONATIONS:

Category	Amount UGX	USD (approx.)
GoFundMe	20,673,827	\$5,483
Local donation	5,500,000	\$1,459
Individual donors	4,263,305	\$1,131
IT funds	73,000	\$19
Additional donations	1,535,041	\$406
Total	32,045,173	\$8480

EXPENDITURES:

Category	Amount UGX	USD (approx.)
Main house construction	22,940,000	\$6,084
PyLadies meetup	440,000	\$117
PDC training	2,850,000	\$756
Farm prep, food forest and kitchen garden	1,660,000	\$440
IT fund	65,000	\$17
Farm equipment	1,082,000	\$286
Total	32,091,000	\$8,492
End of year cash holdings	45,827	\$12

USD amount is approximate and based on March 2026 exchange rate.

GROUP VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION (SCHEME) (VSLA)

Particular	Amount	USD (approx)
Savings	774,000	\$218
Sale from produce	464,000	\$130
Accumulated Interest	403,800	\$114
Total	1,642,800	\$462
Active loans (25)	1,000,000	\$281
Expected interest (10%)	100,000	\$28
Cash at hand	642,800	\$181

NB: The borrowers have different return dates as members borrow and return on every meeting day (every Wednesday) unless it's an emergency. Loans are generally repaid within one month.

NON-FINANCIAL DONATIONS

Source	Item	Qty
Nebbi District Local Government	Teak seedling	500
Nebbi District Local Government	White teak seedlings	300
Nebbi District Local Government	Eucalyptus seedlings	200
Nebbi District Local Government	Sacks of napier grass	3
Volunteers	Number	33
International volunteers	Number	7
Local volunteers	Number	26
	Approximate time/hrs spend per individual	1,250



Winy makes a raised garden bed as part of Permaculture Designer Certificate (PDC) training.

What is permaculture?

And what does Ngombor mean to me?

A note from Kate, our Permaculture Consultant.

When I talk about Ngombor, I'll sometimes get challenged, "Why are you working with a model permaculture farm in Uganda, when there are so many troubles in the world! Why this?"

The reasons are friendship, equality, and hope. Our co-founder, Liz Argall, is a dear friend of mine. I met her at a permaculture discussion at a science fiction convention more than a decade ago. I already knew about her through her online comic, **Things Without Arms and Without Legs**, a web comic about creatures who are kind. She's one of the most wholesome people I know; kind and perceptive and gentle but FIERCE!!! As the daughter of Australian diplomats, Liz understands the impact of colonialism on a deeper level than most, and I trust her when she tells me that anti-colonial thinking and gender equality are "baked in" to Ngombor.

Ngombor means hope; specifically hope through persistent effort. It's a concept I've held onto through the changes in my own life over the past year.

This area of western Uganda is incredibly poor in resources. Hearing that it's "hard to get fresh water" doesn't properly describe waiting in line for six or seven hours for access to the only well for kilometers, because the other water sources in the area have dried up for the season. It doesn't have the same



Illustration: Felix Müller (www.zukunftselbermachen.de) Licence: CC-BY-SA 4.0

visceral depth as seeing a photo of the muddy water that's available.

Yet the Ngombor community members are positive and cheerful, and they're working hard to build a garden out of a plot of rocky land that others dismissed as hopeless.

Most people who've heard of permaculture at all, might think of it as "just gardening," but it's much more than that. Permaculture aims to create systems which meet human needs while regenerating and healing the environment. It encompasses gardens, buildings, communities, and organizations, while mimicking the way nature works. Permaculture weaves together multiple approaches, technologies, and solutions to problems of sustainability, creating beneficial relationships and connections.

The term 'permaculture' was introduced by Australians Bill Mollison and David Holmgren in the 1970s, originally derived from the phrase 'permanent agriculture.' Over time, its definition has broadened to include a variety of systems associated with 'permanent culture.'

Permaculture draws on many traditional practices, but it synthesizes them in a way that also incorporates appropriate technology. We need to respond to climate change and environmental degradation quickly, or face human and ecological catastrophes. Single or simplistic solutions can create new or worse problems; solving systems requires systems thinking. For instance, our teak forests were endangered by a fire someone set to clear brush this season, but keeping the area mowed and using the grass for mulch solves multiple problems.

Permaculture has three basic ethics: Earth care, people care, and "Fair share," or returning the surplus.

Permaculture has principles which direct us to observe natural systems and mimic the way they work, while

getting multiple uses out of each element. Beyond sustainability, it embraces abundance, regeneration, and healing.

According to Starhawk at **Earth Activist Training**:

"Permaculture is also a global movement and network. ... Permaculture practitioners are involved in projects all over the world—we have more on-the-ground projects in the third world than the U.N. Vietnam adopted permaculture as its core agricultural system, and increased production over 15%. Cuba turned to permaculture after the Soviet Union collapsed, taking with it their major oil supplies and markets, and now feeds its people with organic crops, many of which are grown in and around cities."

Permaculture helps us shift our thinking from separation to connection, isolation to interdependence.

For someone who has grown up in the wet Pacific Northwest of the US, Ngombor offers a great way to learn, and I'm proud to be part of this journey.

~Kate Webb

Tribute: Dennis Argall

(1943–2023)



Dennis Argall was a career diplomat whose life was altered by medical invalidity, but he refused to retreat from the world. Through the online platform Nabuur, he connected with a young visionary in the DR Congo named Vincent Ulargiw. While Dennis offered strategy and mentorship to many, he saw something different in Vincent—a determination to achieve the impossible.

Dennis's approach was never to "save," but to equip. One of his first acts was sending Vincent two cameras so that the community could document their own experiences rather than relying on outsiders to tell their story. He was delighted when Vincent began blogging independently, taking ownership of the narrative. Ngombor is the continuation of that logic: providing the tools, strategy, and solidarity to let the community build its own future.

FROM THE ARCHIVES:

Read the history of Dennis and Vincent's first collaboration:
easterncongo.blogspot.com



*Ngombor community members receiving jackfruit seedlings we cultivated.
All photos from Uganda were taken by Ngombor community members.*

NGOMBOR IS A REGISTERED COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION IN UGANDA

web: ngombor.org

email: info@ngombor.org

mailing list: ngombor.beehiiv.com

youtube: [@Ngombor](https://www.youtube.com/@Ngombor)

Support the Future:

www.gofundme.com/f/support-ngombors-sustainable-future