

Job Posting

Permaculture Farm Coordinator



**Sierra Leone Foundation for New Democracy
Ta-Valema Permaculture Farm & Learning Lab
Mondema Village, Sierra Leone, West Africa**

Contact Information:

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The Sierra Leone Foundation for New Democracy (SLFND) organization operates a rural village pre-school on 20 acres in the village of Mondema, Gorama Mende Chiefdom, Kenema District. A major initiative is for on-site vegetable gardens and fruit production to help provide nutritious food for the 250 students and staff. The school has been in operation for two years and the gardens and fruit production in the early stages of development. SLFND and on-the-ground activities are inspired by and managed with the permaculture ethics and design principles. The Ta-Valema Permaculture Farm and Learning Lab (Ta-Valema means “point of germination” in the local Mende language) is the name given to the food growing and related educational effort.

Job Description

Permaculture Farm Coordinator

Position Purpose

The Ta-Valema Permaculture Farm & Learning Lab needs a Coordinator to:

Provide overall coordination of the management, maintenance, improvement, and educational activities of the Farm consistent with permaculture ethics, design principles and compatible with previous development and initiatives. Work with local staff, students, parents and others to continuously nurture understanding, improve food production, and provide educational opportunities for all. The Coordinator must be sensitive to local culture, traditions, have excellent communication and problem-solving skills, thrive in a spartan living and working environment, and love children.

Position Structure

This position has a varied structure regarding who the employee reports to. The position could report to:

- SLFND In-Country Director: As available and possible
- SLFND Executive Director: As available and possible

SLFND has an experienced permaculture consultant for design and technical assistance.

Duties - Examples

Management and Maintenance

- Provide the management and maintenance inputs required to improve food production
- Use, manage and maintain the existing solar powered water system (solar pump, pipes, tanks, hydrants)
- Participate in building and grounds development and maintenance. Existing buildings are school, kitchen, composting toilet, retreat center (bedrooms) with a toilet building. Other development includes vegetable gardens, solar powered water distribution system, well, playground, infiltration basins, minimally developed roads, fruit tree plantings.

Food Production

Further develop permaculture inspired gardens and fruit production for the purposes of year-round food production:

Vegetables

- The existing vegetable garden is about 3,000 sq. ft. of small, terraced plots presently tended to by about 10 women gardeners.

- Provide the technical expertise and management required to improve the vegetable production, from bed preparation, seeding through harvest, crop rotation, soil fertility improvements, use of green mulch and more
- Follow, and improve upon the existing production manual and methods

Fruit Production

- Monitor and manage the planting, tending of numerous young fruit trees.
- Expand fruit planting

Ecological Vitality

Plan and implement for improved ecological vitality of the site. Currently there are about 10 “eco-site” workers whose job is to brush and otherwise manage much of the 20 acres.

- Monitor and manage the eco-site workers so that cumulatively the property’s ecological condition will improve over time

Animal Husbandry

SLFND has goats on site but little infrastructure for management (fences, pens, etc.).

- Ideally the Coordinator would be able to provide leadership in developing and initiating goat management.

Training

Every moment can be a learning opportunity.

- Lead by example and offer continuous informal and formal education opportunities to village and area residents and visitors

Record Keeping

- Develop and maintain records of observations, actions, results, issues, etc.

Special Projects

SLFND seeks to let the Coordinator pursue their interests by proposing special projects that would be complimentary to the mission of SLFND. Examples of special projects are:

- Seed saving – learning indigenous practices and training
- Ecological Improvements – what specifically could be done to rapidly and substantially improve conditions?

Skills

- Familiar with permaculture ethics and design principles
- Gardening experience
- Basic understanding of permaculture, vegetable gardening
- English speaker

Competencies

- Self-motivating
- Good communicator
- Culturally sensitive
- Flexible – can thrive in an environment where plans change constantly due to circumstances beyond one's control
- Patient
- Good listener

Other

- On site housing is provided at the retreat center. This is an indigenous style, secure, mud brick/zinc roof building.
- Food is provided and will be primarily the local diet dominated by rice and vegetables. Meat such as chicken and goat is occasionally available but easily avoided in not wanted.