There has been a concept floating around various communities for the past forty years. This concept is called permaculture. Even though this term is heard throughout our neighborhoods and all over the internet, many do not actually know what this term means. However, it is changing the way people live all over the globe and could be a possible solution to world hunger.

**What is permaculture?**

Permaculture is a term first used by its founders [Bill Mollison and David Holmgren](http://www.greengurus.co.uk/2010/01/david-holmgren-bill-mollison.html) in the 70’s. It comes from two words; permanent and agriculture. When many people think of permaculture, what comes to mind is a gardener or farmer. Permaculture is so much more than this. It is a complete way of life. Its principles cover what you eat to the type of housing you live in and the energy that you use. Permacuture, also known as Eco-Agriculture, is a sustainable way of life that imitates nature. It is safe for humans, animals and the environment. It is the most complete system in sustainability and it does not take huge amounts of land to be able to put its principles into place. Many people have beautiful and effective systems on very small lots. [The Urban Homesteaders](http://urbanhomestead.org/) have a completely self-sufficient urban farm on only 1/10 of an acre of land. This small urban homestead grows six thousand pounds of food per year, uses solar electricity and biofuel to run vehicles for delivery of their produce throughout their community. Although the homestead began because of a concerned father and his desire to feed his children the best quality food he could provide for them; today it also provides an income for the entire family.

**The Ethics and Principles of Permaculture**

The foundational ethics of permaculture are:

* Care of the Earth: Ongoing care and maintenance for all life systems to thrive and multiply
* Care of Humans: Beginning with ourselves and expanding to our families, neighbors and wider communities
* Fair Share: Taking of what we need and sharing the excess

Using these ethics as a guide, twelve major principles evolved that are practiced in order to fulfill the foundations of permaculture. These principles are:

* Observe and interact
* Catch and store energy
* Obtain a yield
* Apply self-regulation and accept feedback
* Use and value renewable resources and services
* Produce no waste
* Design from patterns to details
* Integrate rather than segregate
* Use small and slow solutions
* Use and value diversity
* Use edges and value the marginal
* Creativity use and respond to change

Truly this system includes every area of life. It has been used successfully in remote places like [Konso, Ethiopia](http://www.permalodge.org/), [Rwanda](http://www.permaculture.co.uk/articles/how-permaculture-made-real-difference-rwanda) and [Palestine](http://www.sustainablecityblog.com/2009/07/permaculture-in-palestine/) to restore and replenish abundance in those areas. Permacultue is practiced worldwide and is slowly but surely making many changes. In the North Alabama area, there is a very productive farm, [The Farmhouse](http://www.thefarmhousehuntsville.com/index.html), where anyone can observe the benefits of this ecological science, take courses and even become certified designers. Change is inevitable; positive change is better, but responsible, self-sufficient, self-sustaining change is the ultimate solution for our future and solving the increasing food crisis that is occurring globally.