

# ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION FOUNDATION

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2018



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## A note from John D. Liu

Dear Friends,

Ecosystem Restoration is “The Great Work of Our Time” and we all have a role to play. It is possible to sequester carbon in plants and in the soil. It is possible to naturally re-regulate the hydrological cycle by rehydrating dehydrated biomes. It is possible to return vegetation to de-vegetated landscapes protecting and returning biodiversity and physically lowering surface temperatures.

Over the last 25 years I’ve studied, documented and communicated about restoring degraded ecosystems all over the Earth. This was a lonely thing to do for a long while but it has gotten much better in the last few years. It is wonderful that the United Nations has declared the ten years from 2021 to 2030 to be the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. Still, it often seems that we are reacting too slowly as the climate change impacts keep coming faster and harder all the time.



When I began to work on the Ecosystem Restoration Camps movement I finally felt like we could succeed to restore the Earth because we have a way to train everyone in best practices to restore soil, water and biodiversity and engage them in this massive shift in civilizational intent. Now I feel the momentum increasing. New camps and new partners are appearing in all parts of the world. In restoring the Earth, we are not in competition because we are all in this together. Whether we are ready or not, we now need to act as a species on a planetary scale.

The Ecosystem Restoration Camps can function as a basic infrastructure for training of people to drive mass ecological restoration and collaborative inquiry. We are more than 7 billion humans on the Earth at this time and we are still growing in numbers. If we make Ecosystem Restoration our common human intention we can ensure the security and the quality of life for our children and generations to come. Knowing this, we have a unique opportunity and a profound obligation.

### **John D. Liu**

Founder of Ecosystem Restoration Camps  
Chairman of the Advisory Council





## Foreword

The UN declared, on March 1, 2019 the decade of Ecosystem Restoration with the aim to massively scale up the restoration of degraded and destroyed ecosystems as a proven measure to fight the climate crisis and enhance food security, water supply and biodiversity. The degradation of land and marine ecosystems undermines the well-being of 3.2 billion people and costs about 10 percent of the annual global gross product from the loss of species and ecosystem services. The work of Ecosystem Restoration Camps has never been more relevant, and will continue to be so in the years ahead.



In 2018, Ecosystem Restoration Camps spent considerable time and attention on developing a strategy for scaling and building the core team. With two new additions to the Executive Board, we now have a strong and dedicated team in place.

Our first project in Spain has shown tremendous progress. After just two years, the positive effects on the land and its communities have become clear. Local farmers are approaching us actively to help them restore their lands. Our story has reached (and inspired) thousands of people all over the world through the work of journalists and filmmakers. And by co-organising the first Re-Generation Festival we put smiles in the hearts of locals and festival goers, by showing that regeneration is not only desperately needed but also an inspiring heartwarming and a merrymaking co-creation activity.

I thank Marieke Karssen and Desiree Driesenaar, who consecutively, led our foundation through its startup phase. I am hopeful that our current directors, Pieter van der Gaag and Jan Hein van der Hoeven can now take us to the next level where we can grow our membership, our resources and our impact around this planet.

Volunteers are at the heart of Ecosystem Restoration Camps and without their efforts we can never be successful. Therefore, I would like to make use of this report to thank all of the amazing people that have contributed to the work of Ecosystem Restoration Camps.

We all do this together and that makes me proud of you! Thank you.

I finally take the opportunity to thank all our members and donors who are, through their generosity and belief, turning this great idea into an even greater reality.

We now look towards 2019. I invite you to join us, or if you are already part of our movement, to continue your support. Our ambitions remain global. The planet is our home, our only home. We therefore need to involve all who can and who are willing to contribute to what John D. Liu calls "The Great Work of our Time."

Brussels, March 28, 2019  
On behalf of the Supervisory Board,

**François De Keuleneer**  
Chairman Supervisory Board

# MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

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The wealth of experience in ecosystem restoration gathered within Ecosystem Restoration Camps provides a solid base for continued development. We continue to organise around our vision and mission. This vision and mission are what fuels our expansion.

## VISION

We envision a fully-functional, peaceful, abundant, biologically diverse Earth brought about through cooperative efforts for the ecological restoration of degraded lands.

## MISSION

1. To work together to restore ecological functionality (natural infiltration and retention of available rainfall and moisture, fertile organic soils and returning complete vegetative cover of trees and grasses) to designated areas;
2. To create “Research, Training and Innovation Centers for Ecological Restoration” to engage people in inquiry into ecological restoration;
3. To train people in existing techniques and for the innovation of new techniques for restoring degraded lands in perpetuity.

## VALUES

Restoring Earth positively impacts both livelihoods and communities. To ensure that our contribution to humanity is ethically sound, we have embraced a set of core values that guide the work of the Foundation.

- |                             |                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. <b>Transparency</b>      | 5. <b>Action oriented</b> |
| 2. <b>Inclusiveness</b>     | 6. <b>Collaborative</b>   |
| 3. <b>Integrity</b>         | 7. <b>Service focused</b> |
| 4. <b>Empowering others</b> |                           |





# OUR ORIGINS

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The idea for Ecosystem Restoration Camps (“ERC”) originated from an online post by John D. Liu in July 2016: “Let’s go camping to restore Earth and ourselves”. An initial 200 supporters soon led to an energetic team of 30+ active volunteers from around the world. Slowly but surely, the group started to self-organise and smaller groups began to form around topics such as ecosystem restoration design, legal and organisational structure, communications, and more.

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These exploratory discussions took place around campfires, through social media, emails, phone calls, and video conferences. It brought together expert practitioners in the fields of permaculture design, soil management, media and communications, mapping, ecology, and more, to reimagine the practice of restoration as an activity for all.

In 2016, as the organisation took its first steps, ERC members began to combine sociocratic principles with a non-profit legal structure. Six groups or “circles” were created, each of which dealt with a different aspect of the organisation’s goals. Representatives of these circles met periodically in a “General Assembly,” with the premise that this structure could be reworked as the group developed. The circles provided transparency and a balance of power among many participants, but meetings became prohibitively long and lacked clear pathways to action. These challenges led us to pivot toward a hybrid approach that encouraged input from diverse stakeholder groups through regular meetings on restoration, communications, and fundraising.

In 2017, the ERC movement took steps to operationalise its ambitions by establishing a legal entity in the Netherlands that could obtain and manage the funds raised through membership-fees, donations and subsidies. This Stichting Ecosystem Restoration Foundation obtained a charity tax status (ANBI or Public Benefit Organisation) in the Netherlands and the Transnational Giving Europe (TGE) status. The Foundation hired a core team of two directors, and two paid staff members to ensure that the work needed to grow the ERC movement is done. Additional roles are filled with a dedicated team of global volunteers. This structure is now helping us to take physical steps towards realising our vision and mission.

The original principles of transparency and co-creation within “circles” is still alive within ERC. As such, meetings that involve decision making are recorded and meeting logbooks are [publicly available online](#).



# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2018

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Looking back, 2018 was a year with many activities and projects aimed at further improving the Foundation and its work in relation to the vision and mission. Some of our highlights are:

## Building the ERC team

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The Foundation stabilized, with two experienced directors, Pieter Van der Gaag and Jan Hein van der Hoeven, two staff members, Ashleigh Brown and Scott Israel, and a team of dedicated volunteers. Together they manage our fundraising, organise financial and logistical support to the ERC camp in Spain, and create partnerships with other camp-sites such as the one with Via Organica in Mexico. They are also maintaining the communication-channels, webinars, and structuring the ERC's processes and procedures.

## Launched a new website

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We completely redesigned **our homepage**, to make information more accessible to visitors and members.

## Webinars

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Led by the dedicated and energetic Timothy Sexauer, ERC organised deep dive webinars featuring scientists and practitioners from around the world who are involved in the field of ecological restoration. Each webinar can be viewed on the webpage of Ecosystem Restoration Camps or on our YouTube channel. On average 50 people followed these deep dives on themes such as Water management and Co-Creating Complexity and Agroforestry and Collaborating Intelligences.



## Hosting ERC's first educational course

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In June 2018, 30 people from all over the world came together to learn how to become permaculture designers with our renowned restoration advisor Rhamis Kent (Co-director of the Permaculture Research Institute). Together the group learned about all of the elements that make up permaculture design and how to apply them to arid landscapes. The course included a visit to Camp Altiplano to see and understand how the theories taught were being implemented in reality at the camp. The end of the course saw 30 new permaculture for arid land designers enter the world.





## Launching the Founding Friends Network

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The Founding Friends Network is a group of individuals and organisations who wish to make a significant contribution of 1,000 euros or more towards the restoration of degraded ecosystems and who want to be involved in the long-term success of ERC. At the end of 2018, there were 17 Founding Friends in the network. ERC's Founding Friends supported the creation of two new structures at Camp Altiplano, as well as the creation of a membership campaign and the purchase of tools, plants and seeds for the winter restoration at the camp in Spain.

## Restoring forest cover in Spain

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ERC continued our restoration partnership in Spain with the La Muela Reforestation Project, an effort to plant 50,000 mixed-species trees to revegetate a degraded mountain slope near Velez Blanco, a town 45 minutes drive from Camp Altiplano. This project was managed by the Alvelal Association, a local group of farmers and landowners working together to regenerate 620,000 hectares of degraded land across the regions of Murcia, Granada and Almeria. This project involved volunteers from Camp Altiplano and was supported by the "tree planting search engine," Ecosia, who provided the trees.

## Convening the first Re-Generation Festival

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In September 2018, Ecosystem Restoration Camps partnered with a collective of individuals who worked together to set up a music festival in La Junquera, the village where the Spanish camp is based. This festival welcomed 500 people from across the world to go camping and restore degraded land together by 'planting to the beat' of music while they worked. These restoration activities took place each morning followed by workshops, locally prepared meals, and live and electronic music performances.

## Expanding restoration impact in Spain

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Through a grant from Patagonia, Camp Altiplano supported small farmers in the region to restore ecosystem function, riparian buffers, and vegetative cover on their farms. The funding covered the volunteer costs for a group of volunteers to learn and implement restoration practices on 4 farms. This project expanded our volunteer base, strengthened the capacity of the Camp Altiplano coordination team, and built new relationships with farmers who want to promote regenerative agriculture in the region.



# 2018 IMPACT

466 

supporting members joined us from around the world.

14 

deep-dive webinars organised

6 

membership movement sessions attended by more than 60 members

More than

1000 

volunteers engaged in hands on restoration

30 

attendees at our first educational course

8500 

trees/shrubs planted

## Communication

**In order to communicate our message to various audiences, we use several communications channels through our website as well as social media. This includes:**

- A bi-monthly general newsletter sent to a wider audience of interested supporters and allies to share important updates and achievements. (2,200+ recipients)
- On Facebook, we manage a non-profit organisational page with more than 7000 followers/fans. On Facebook, we also manage a group page that invites a broad exchange of information around ecosystem restoration and also provides a platform for sharing our story, campaigns, and other news. The reach of this group has been essential to sharing our message and building an online community. (~14,000 members.)
- The website received 21,600 unique visitors in 2018, which is an increase of 21%.
- Most of these visitors come from the United States, The Netherlands, The United Kingdom and Spain. 82% of our visitors were on our website for the very first time.
- Through Twitter, we share restoration news from ERC and from the broader restoration community, reaching approximately 800 followers.
- Our Instagram account shares updated images of our first camp in Spain and documents progress that campers are making daily to restore the land. Our number of followers has grown from 388 in February 2018 to 1,500 in December 2018.

# ORGANISATION

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## New Members to the Supervisory Board

The articles and responsibilities of the Supervisory Board were adopted in 2017 are [available online](#). The Supervisory Board welcomed three new members in 2018.

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### Jane Nakhanu Wegesa Fraser

is from Kenya. Jane is Secretary to the Board of the Platform For Land Use Sustainability Kenya and Country Coordinator for The Vetiver Network International (TVNI), promoting vetiver projects in Kenya and linking suppliers to trainers. Jane is a certified trainer by TVNI for nursery propagation/supply and soil and water conservation, moisture retention and erosion control. She also supervises projects for Rapha Vetiver Engineering Limited, a private firm that specializes in soil stabilization and erosion control in Kenya.



### Steven Lang

is from the United Kingdom. Steven is founding Director of InSpring, a business focused on enabling young people to participate meaningfully in solving systemic social and environmental challenges. Prior to founding InSpring, Steven was a senior partner with Ernst and Young (EY), where he held various roles advising global corporates on the creation of societal value, delivery of purpose, sustainability and the measurement of social and environmental impact. Steven lead EY's work with the Natural Capital Coalition and was a central figure in the collaborative initiative to create the world's first Natural Capital Protocol.

### Loucky Spit

is from the Netherlands. Loucky is a social sustainability professional with experience in private business, public-private partnerships, and NGOs in various continents. She worked on high-level diplomatic negotiations, as well as with local communities on the ground and monitors the sustainability of agricultural projects and value chains in developing countries as an environmental and social analyst for the Dutch development bank (FMO). In 2018, she joined the Supervisory Board as an intern, as part of the Dutch "Blikverruimers Academy", an initiative to break open boards of corporates and organisations with young people. In 2019 she joined ERC's Supervisory Board as a full member.



## Advisory Council

In addition, the Foundation is supported by a volunteer Advisory Council of **recognized leaders** who support ERC's vision and mission, and who are available to provide strategic advice on a range of issues to the Boards and staff. John D. Liu is its Chairman. In 2018, two valuable advisors joined the ranks.

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### Willem Ferwerda

has a long track record in ecology, biodiversity, conservation and business. He studied tropical ecology, agriculture and environmental science and is an expert in multi-stakeholder processes. As the head of the IUCN's Netherlands office (International Union for Conservation of Nature), he supported hundreds of local conservation and restoration projects in the tropics.

Besides being the founder of Leaders for Nature, an international business network on biodiversity and ecosystems, Willem Ferwerda is the CEO of Commonland Group, board member and advisor of several institutions, and is an executive business and ecosystem fellow at the Rotterdam School of Management – Erasmus University (Netherlands) and the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (Switzerland). In 2010, he created the first agreement on ecosystems and biodiversity between the Netherlands Confederation of Industries and nature organizations. Willem has worked in Latin America, Africa and Europe.



### Béla Hatvany

is well known for his numerous innovations, including the touch-screen, CD-ROM and database building block of the internet. Béla Hatvany is also the co-founder and benefactor of Mustard Seed Trust. In all his activities Béla wishes to enable the feeling of a world which is one organism made up of a vast multitude of individuals. We would like this to become a shared experience which binds us all into one mighty love relationship, so that we all enable it to become a singularity of great beauty.



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## The ERC Team

In February, Marieke Karssen stopped her role as Executive Director of the Foundation. Desiree Driesenaar became our new director in March. However, she did not find a match between herself and the work of the foundation, and left at the end of April 2018. In May 2018 two Supervisory Board members took over the role of Desiree Driesenaar as Director in the interim. As the financial situation of the ERC was not in good health, both directors declined most of the payment offered for this role, and prioritised the expenditure on the work in Spain. For the most part of 2018, the team consisted of:



## Pieter van der Gaag

is ERC's executive director, using his experience in organisational development in the charity sector, communications and marketing with organisations such as IUCN and Triodos Bank. He also was vice-chair of the Global Reporting Initiative's Stakeholder Council, NGO focal point to the 2000 revision of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, Executive Director of the Natural Capital Coalition and Head of Sustainability at the FMO, the Dutch Development Bank. He currently co-owns consumer focussed sustainability platform [nextwayofliving.nl](http://nextwayofliving.nl).



## Jan Hein van der Hoeven

is ERC's finance director, using his experience from working for the impact investment company, PYMWYMIC, and his own experience as an investor. He holds a double master's degree in Social and Organisational Psychology and a master's degree in Business. He now aspires to become a trainer in Social Permaculture.

## Ashleigh Brown

is one of the first people to join the conversation about setting up Ecosystem Restoration Camps back in 2016, decided to move to Camp Altiplano and lived there until October 2018. In January 2018 she formally became the Business Development Manager at the foundation, meaning she is responsible for income generation partnerships, strategies and applications to grow the organisation.



## Scott Israel

ERC's webmaster, fell in love with nature at a young age, and has dedicated his work to helping humans live in harmony with the natural world. After studying Sustainable Development at the University of British Columbia, Scott continued his learning in the fields of Permaculture, Biodynamics, Sustainable Design and Herbalism while working professionally in the field of software and web development. Scott believes deeply in the potential for humanity to restore our planet to a Garden of Eden through both cultural and technological innovation, and he is committed to being a part of this important work.

We were fortunate to have Gytha van der Veer join us for 6 months during her sabbatical. Gytha is an experienced communications professional who supported Ecosystem Restoration Camps with the development of a communications strategy and the membership development campaign.

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During 2018, ERC also welcomed three new volunteer members of the membership and communications team.

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### **Lisa Mead**

is a legal professional who has been working on developing a global legal paradigm shift to recognise the rights of nature as equivocal to human rights. She supports ERC as a Membership Liaison.



### **Kaytlyn O'Connor**

a climate change activist from the west coast of the United States, is a Membership Liaison for ERC. Kaytlyn and Lisa collaborate to support our members to organise events, birthday fundraisers, connect with each other and incorporate member ideas into our operations.



### **Gini Morandi**

joined as ERC's social media coordinator, quickly and effectively improving our social media presence and content.





# DECISION MAKING

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The Foundation was created on February 16, 2017 and structured so that power is evenly distributed throughout the organisation. The Board of Directors are paid individuals, accountable to a volunteer Supervisory Board. A volunteer Advisory Council links the work of the Foundation to the broader field of experts and organisations active in ecosystem restoration.

This structure allowed us to become an official Dutch Charity (In Dutch: ANBI, Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling).

- [Download the articles of the Foundation in English](#)
- [Download the articles of the Foundation in Dutch](#)



The Board of Directors take the decisions steering the Foundation. Restoration Camps are autonomous entities affiliated with the Foundation. A set of criteria determine if a restoration activity will be recognized as part of the ERC community. The Foundation collaborates

with Camps in an advisory and/or co-creational manner. When Camps need funding from the Foundation, that funding could be supplied based on well supported proposals that prove the alignment with the mission of the ERC.



# OUR PROCESS TO SELECT NEW CAMPS IS AS FOLLOWS

- 1.** Any interested party interested in becoming a Camp reads the [‘Becoming an Ecosystem Restoration Camp’ document](#).



- 2.** Once they have a clear idea of what a camp entails, they fill in the [‘Camp Application’ form](#).



- 3.** The ERC Foundation staff assesses if the potential Camp location meets the following criteria:



1. Located on/near degraded land with the intention to restore regionally and teach others about the process
2. In a safe location
3. Has access to its own resources (human, financial, infrastructure)
4. Able and willing to communicate progress and collect data

- 4.** If the Camp requests meet our criteria, a Zoom call is arranged to discuss details of the partnership



- 5.** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is filled in and signed



New Camps can be added to the Foundation based on a Memorandum of Understanding. They can be affiliated Camps owned and operated by restoration-focused organisations around the world, or Camps initiated by ERC with an administrative legal registration in the country where the Camp will be based.



# OUTLOOK FOR 2019

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Throughout 2018, the ERC laid the foundation for an enormous task ahead. We believe the time for our work is now. We witness climate marches by teens and adults around the planet, showing an increased sense of urgency by people around the world. This urgency is further underpinned with worrisome reports from the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) showing that the impacts of climate change are affecting life more rapidly than previously anticipated as well as the stark conclusions of the report released in May by the United Nations Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services that reveal the staggering scale and accelerating rate of species extinction.

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**ERC is well placed to contribute to the herculean task ahead. In order to maximise impact, the Foundation has created a set of strategic short-term goals and an overarching long-term goal:**



**By the end of 2030, 1 million people**  
from around the world will have had  
a transformative experience at an  
Ecosystem Restoration Camp.

In this one long-term goal, the mission and vision of ERC is best captured. At least 1 million people will have had a transformative experience at a camp and through that, a deepened understanding of the value and potential of ecosystems to help humanity thrive. Spending time at a camp will empower people to restore and maintain healthy ecosystems around the world through newly acquired skills and insights. This will lead to a group, 1 million strong, that will be able to instill hope and help inspire the

transition to sustainable and thriving human societies that value our natural capital around this planet. The impact of 1 million people volunteering at an ecosystem restoration camp will have increased the fertility and function of ecosystems around the world. More carbon will be stored in plants and soil, and water quality and biodiversity will have increased. With more fertile soils, local food systems will stabilise food security and the livelihoods based on them will return.

“

I've never felt so connected to a place - when you partner with a landscape and help shape it into something new, it's like building your own house. I was so proud of what we had done as a team in the year I was there. I arrived anxious about the climate and slightly burnt out from office work, and left completely reinvigorated, full of hope that I had now found a concrete solution to climate change that I could contribute to with my own hands, head and heart, and that fills me with a sense of purpose. To this day, even back in 'normal life', I am still working towards organising restoration awareness and activities, and I don't think I'll ever stop.

”

**Kirsten van Reisen**  
(Camper)



“

I was inspired to come to Camp Altiplano when I heard that people were looking for positive actions to take against climate change and ecological breakdown, in a world that seems incapacitated by the challenge. By getting involved in the restoration of a specific piece of land I have begun to understand the complex ecological and social issues that have kept it in a spiral of degradation, and seen paths that must be explored as routes to regeneration. I feel hugely empowered to have gained a perspective of the practical steps that can lead to a sustainable future. The challenges are definitely greater than I had ever imagined, but in the face of that truth I have become galvanised to act and most importantly have found a community of inspiring people to work with.

”

**Jonathan Church**  
(Camper)



# WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO ACHIEVE THIS TARGET?

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It will require that ERC not only focuses on restoring ecosystems, but also and perhaps most importantly on involving, educating and empowering people from around the world. Ecosystem Restoration Camps will continue to be places where people want to go, contribute to restoration, learn and grow. This goal, based on the vision and mission of ERC, will require many places around the world that are created, built and populated to provide space to these numbers.

In order to be attractive places for 1 million people, individual Ecosystem Restoration Camps must have an ambition to significantly impact large areas of degraded ecosystems. They must exist to restore natural function and healthy, local livelihoods that will underpin thriving local communities. They must also have an infrastructure in place that provides visitors with comfort. Showing that ecosystem restoration is possible by doing the work needed will attract people and it will empower them with the message:

“ We, normal people, can do this. We can spend a little bit of our time and have an enormous impact. We do not have to stay stuck on an unsustainable development path. ”



# STRATEGIC GOALS FOR 2019



## Establish a Camp on Every Continent

More camps will be able to host more people. We want to have at least one camp on every continent around the world by the end of 2019. These camps do not necessarily need to be operated by the Foundation. Ecosystem Restoration Camps differentiates between two types of camps. One type is fully operated by the Ecosystem Restoration Foundation (a core camp) and the other type is operated by other organisations and associated the Ecosystem Restoration Camps (affiliated camps). Camps can make use of the services of Ecosystem Restoration Camps that are aimed at making these projects successful, and build a global network of camps around the world that are physically restoring earth's degraded ecosystems.



## Have 13.200 people visit Ecosystem Restoration Camps around the world

You may wonder about this odd number as a goal. But if we have camps in all continents and they focus on hosting people equalling approximately 30 per week, this is a logical number to strive for. In April 2019, the infrastructure at our first camp in Spain will be completed. The camp can host 30 people when it is finished. It is imperative that we have at least 6 camps that can host similar numbers. But we will also need to do more. In Spain, last year, the camp co-organised a regeneration festival. It attracted 500 visitors. Open days can attract mostly local community-residents to visit the camp. At least one per month should be feasible. If all these activities take place, the number of 13.200 can be reached. And if we double the number of camps each year, this number will factor to the ultimate goal of having 1 million people undergo a transformative experience in an Ecosystem Restoration Camp.



## Raise Our membership to 2000 People

Membership is needed. Membership fees make it possible for the Foundation to support camp activities, build infrastructure for people visiting, build the knowledge base for camps, and support the exchange between camps. It will allow the Foundation to help projects realise their own goals. Our goal is to be a movement of millions, but for 2019 we will be proud if 2,000 people would spend some of their monthly income on Ecosystem Restoration Camps. We strive to keep our central overhead low, so that the major part of the Member contribution will be used in accordance with our statutory objectives.





€1M

## Raise 1 million Euro

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1 million Euros will first allow us to build a strong core team at the central Foundation. It will further allow us to build the knowledge base for Ecosystem Restoration Camps. It will allow us to fund the startup of camps and realise their infrastructure, attract expertise to develop restoration plans, and establish small teams. At time of writing in March, we have raised 250.000 Euro. We are already a quarter of the way towards our target.



## Establish a Monitoring and Evaluation System for Camps

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We will develop an easy to use and effective monitoring and evaluation system for measuring the impact of ecosystem restoration camps. With this M&E system we can collect the data needed to judge if our work contributes to our vision and mission. We can also supply researchers around the world with this data to support the development of more effective approaches to ecosystem restoration.



## Develop Simple Educational Tools

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These tools must help visitors at camps understand the basic principles and techniques of ecosystem restoration, the potential impact of ecosystem restoration projects, and the reasons why certain choices are made. We are also creating online and in situ learning experiences, as well as handy infographic guides about ecosystem restoration techniques.



## Incorporation in the United States

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In 2019 we will also establish a foundation in the United States that will facilitate US citizens and residents to join our movement.



## Financial Outlook

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In 2019 our financial situation will much improve allowing us to undertake more activities. At time of writing of this report there is no financial deficit foreseen for the 2019 budget.





# CAMP ALTIPLANO

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By Rachel Robson (camper)

2018 was a year of growth in many ways for Camp Altiplano. Seeds sown in the winter blossomed into a luscious cover crop in the spring, transforming the camp into a green oasis among dry and bare almond fields. The summer months brought a bounty of fresh organic produce from the kitchen garden. Good progress was made on restoring the roundhouse and the indoor kitchen cabin structure was finished before the worst of the winter weather hit.

With a clear restoration plan for the next three years at the camp and successful restoration projects carried out on other local farms, the project is well on its way to finding its place among the growing network of organisations and individuals working towards the regeneration of degraded land in Murcia and Andalucia.





# ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION AT CAMP ALTIPLANO

**The Camp Altiplano Restoration Plan 2018-2021** was published in November 2018. The goal was to create a plan which supports campers with planning and decision-making in the years to come and which contributes to the development of regenerative farming techniques in this part of Spain.



The methods chosen are sensitive to the region's social and economic context as well as the environmental challenges. In time, the camp hopes to develop scalable agricultural models that can be replicated by local farmers and landowners. The plan was developed in consultation with local experts, the AIVelAI Association and advisors from ERC.

Camp Altiplano was happy to gain the support of DEME who pledged to sponsor the camp's restoration activities for the winter 2018/19

planting season. A world leader in dredging, marine engineering and environmental remediation, DEME's vision is to work towards a sustainable future by offering solutions for worldwide challenges: rising sea levels, climate change, the transition towards renewable energy, polluted rivers and soils, growing population and the scarcity of natural resources.

## Cover crop and holistic grazing

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In early 2018, a mixed cover crop was sown over almost all 5hectares of Camp Altiplano. By May it had grown and functioned to protect the soil from erosion, reduce evaporation, increase biodiversity and provide a source of organic matter. At the end of summer, the cover crop was grazed by 1.000 sheep in a holistic grazing plan carried out with local shepherds. By passing through a sheep's digestive system and coming out as manure, the organic material will have begun the decomposition process and seeds will be delivered to the soil in an environment that will promote germination for 2019.

## Patagonia-funded restoration projects

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In 2018 Camp Altiplano and the AlVelAl Association made a successful joint application for funding from Patagonia to carry out four week-long restoration projects, each on a different farm. The first two weeks took place in December 2018 with eight people from across Europe taking part. During this time around 2.400 plants were planted in natural corridors and along swales, and a stone dam was constructed to prevent erosion.



## Re-Generation Festival

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During the Re-Generation Festival in September 2018, Camp Altiplano led an activity called "Planting to the Beat" which saw over 150 people plant a perennial corridor along the edge of a field in La Junquera.

## Planting

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The planting season for Camp Altiplano runs from around October to March as this is the wettest part of the year. The plans for the camp include the following projects which were started in Autumn/Winter 2018:

- **Agroforestry**  
Holes for the trees in the agroforestry system were dug in preparation for planting in early 2019. The tree lines were planted on contour to reduce soil erosion. The alleys in between the tree rows were alternately planted with aromatics or left just cover cropped, to create a model that could include harvesting by tractor.
- **Swales**  
The swales were planted with native shrubs and trees, creating natural corridors to invite birds and pollinators into the camp. The swales will be left and observed to see which plants begin to establish themselves as seed is introduced by visiting birds.
- **Riparian Zone**  
Camp Altiplano partnered with La Junquera farmer Alfonso Chico de Guzman to plant a strip of native trees and shrubs along the western side of the riparian zone adjacent to the camp. In total around 4.000 plants were planted in December, including 2.000 cuttings of trees such as willow and poplar around the ponds. This vegetation will fix the soil in place, create biomass, provide food and habitat for wildlife and shield both the camp and ponds from strong south-westerly winds.

As well as focusing on the restoration of the 5hectares at the camp itself, in 2018 Camp Altiplano began to connect volunteers, farmers and landowners with the goal of supporting restoration on a larger scale. This not only benefits the land and farmers but also creates more opportunities for people to learn and practise the skills needed for ecosystem restoration.



# BUILDING CAMP ALTIPLANO

By the end of Spring 2018, enough basic facilities had been built to allow campers to live on-site for the first time:



Two compost toilets



A large shade structure for an outdoor cooking space



Two yurts to sleep up to four people each



Three bell tents providing additional sleeping space for six people



A polytunnel and simple tool shed in the kitchen garden

## The Roundhouse

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Due to budget constraints, campers focused on the construction of a roundhouse building on ruins of a previous structure. Using low-cost natural building techniques, the stone and lime walls of the ground floor were rebuilt, followed by the timber frame and reciprocal roof structure. Straw bale walls for the first floor and an initial layer of cob plaster on the exterior of the building were completed just as the winter frosts began. The building was completed in Spring 2019 and will provide welcome additional communal and sleeping spaces.

## The Indoor Kitchen Cabin

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Thanks to funding from [ERC's Founding Friends Campaign](#), in Summer 2018 it was possible to start work on the indoor kitchen cabin designed for the camp by local eco-architects Ecoprojecta. The main structure was built over a period of two months by several small teams of volunteers under the guidance of the Construction Coordinator. The wall frames were then packed up with a light straw clay mixture that gives both solidity to the wall and insulation the building. In the end the cabin was wrapped with a Vynolon cover to weatherproof it. The interior plastering and furnishings will be completed in 2019, providing the campers with somewhere sheltered to cook, eat and spend time together.

# THE PEOPLE MAKE THE PLACE

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The camp would of course be nothing without the support of a steady stream of campers passing through to help with the restoration and construction projects. Over the course of 2018, Camp Altiplano hosted 68 campers (including 8 who participated in our Patagonia funded restoration projects on other local farms). Whether staying for one week or four months, each brought something different to the community and shared their time, energy, skills and knowledge generously.

The progress at Camp Altiplano was mirrored by the strengthening of the Spanish Association for ERC. Catalysed by meetings at the Re-Generation Festival in September 2018, the board now has an experienced team of people committed to seeking funding for further restoration projects and, in time, to opening more ecosystem restoration camps in Spain.

On many occasions in 2018 Camp Altiplano also experienced the incredible support of the international Ecosystem Restoration Camps members. From soliciting advice on building a humanure system through a Facebook post, to having a weather station gifted and installed for us, the pace at which the camp has been able to progress is in many ways testament to the strength of this amazing network.



# IN THE WORDS OF A CAMPER...

Kelly de Gheldere participated in the Patagonia restoration projects at two local farms and spent a week at Camp Altiplano in December 2018. Here she describes her motivations for taking part and what she gained from the experience:

“I grew up in the countryside and spent most of my childhood horse riding in well-preserved natural areas in Belgium. I ended up studying communication and working in a city only to realise something really important was missing. I wanted to be outside, back in nature, using my hands instead of a screen.

After a month spent reading about regenerative agriculture, I discovered the Camp Altiplano Patagonia project. Two weeks later I was there, my hands right in the soil. My time at the camp has been very enriching since I am pretty novice regarding soil management and regeneration. There's a shift happening as more and more people are willing to act for the Earth and its biodiversity and what I think is so great about this project is it makes these opportunities accessible to anyone who would like to get involved. We can ALL learn how to have a better impact, even on the most degraded kind of land as we witnessed in Spain.

I met incredibly motivated and like minded people at Camp Altiplano and left full of positive energy and determination to use my new skills and keep learning more on other projects. It is about restoring the soil and yourself at the same time!”

**Kelly de Gheldere, 26.**  
From Belgium.





# PLANS FOR 2019

## Spring 2019

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- Finish implementing first phase of Restoration Plan planting including trial with compost tea brewing
- Prepare the vegetable garden
- Finish building the infrastructure required to host more people at the camp (a bunkhouse, a learning space, showers and an improved humanure system)
- Recruit more Spanish/Spanish-speaking staff to the coordination team

## Summer 2019

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- Begin running courses, workshops and restoration experiences
- Maintain the vegetable garden
- Hold regular open days

## Autumn/Winter 2019

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- Implement second phase of Restoration Plan planting
- Develop camper experience based on feedback from 2017/18 planting season
- Harvest and process food from vegetable garden



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2018

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The Foundation received funds from three primary sources: direct (larger) donations, grants and online payments (donations and monthly/annual membership).

## Memberships and online donations

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In 2018, we had 466 members and received 37.508 Euro in donations through our website and through people raising funds for us for their birthdays.

## Grant applications

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In 2018 we successfully applied and received a grant from the Patagonia Foundation. This grant (4283 Euro) was used to restore land near the Camp Altiplano. We also started negotiations with the Mustard Seed Trust which successfully resulted in a grant of 100.000 Euro in 2019.

## Direct donations

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In 2018 we received 26.287 Euro in direct donations, fully through our founding friends campaign.

Our total income in 2018 was: **76.972**  
(2017: 133.823)

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49 percent came from membership fees. 34 percent came from founding friends, and 6 percent came from grants. The total income also included fees paid for our first PDC course held near Camp Altiplano.

## Expenses

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In 2018 79.266 Euro was spent on the activities of the Foundation such as financial support for Camp Altiplano (56.046 EUR) and maintenance of our communication channels. In 2017 this amount was 48.369 Euro.

Another 31.989 Euro was spent on overhead costs. 20.021 Euro of this amount consists of payments to the directors. The remainder is office costs, travel costs, accounting costs and insurance. Other staff received in total 18.645 Euro, of which most can be attributed to the activities of the organisation such as building our IT infrastructure and supporting the camps. In 2017 the overhead was 43.520 Euro.

In total the expenses exceeded our income by 34.981 Euro. This significantly reduced our end of year reserve built up in 2017. 2018 ended with a reserve of 5.258 Euro. In 2017 this was 40.239 Euro.

The ERC staff constantly strives to keep the overhead as low as possible. We do not rent an office, and worked either as volunteers or against minimal compensation. The majority of our meetings we do online to avoid travel costs as well as the associated emissions.



# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

ERC Consolidated Statement of Activities for the years ended June 30, 2018 and 2017

	2018	2017
<b>Benefits</b>		
• Memberships and online donations	37.508	133.823
• Direct donations	26.467	-
• Grant applications	12.997	-
	<b>76.972</b>	<b>133.823</b>
<b>Delivered Projects</b>		
• Support camps	63.386	48.369
• Knowledge exchange and volunteer matching	15.880	-
	<b>79.226</b>	<b>48.369</b>
<b>Other staff costs</b>		
• Work by third parties	10.231	37.702
• Management fees	16.554	-
	<b>26.785</b>	<b>37.702</b>
<b>Cost of fundraising</b>		
• Advertising costs	619	236
• Representation costs	166	-
	<b>785</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>Office costs</b>		
• Office equipment	405	616
• Communication and website	1.860	-
	<b>2.154</b>	<b>4.966</b>
<b>Overhead</b>		
• Accountant costs	1.500	1.573
• Advisory costs	-	2.909
• Business insurance	654	484
	<b>2.154</b>	<b>4.966</b>
<b>Financial income and expenses</b>		
<b>Interest and similar expenses</b>		
• Bankcharges and commission	202	1.695
• Transaction costs PayPal	332	-
• Transaction costs TransferWise	164	-
	<b>698</b>	<b>1.695</b>

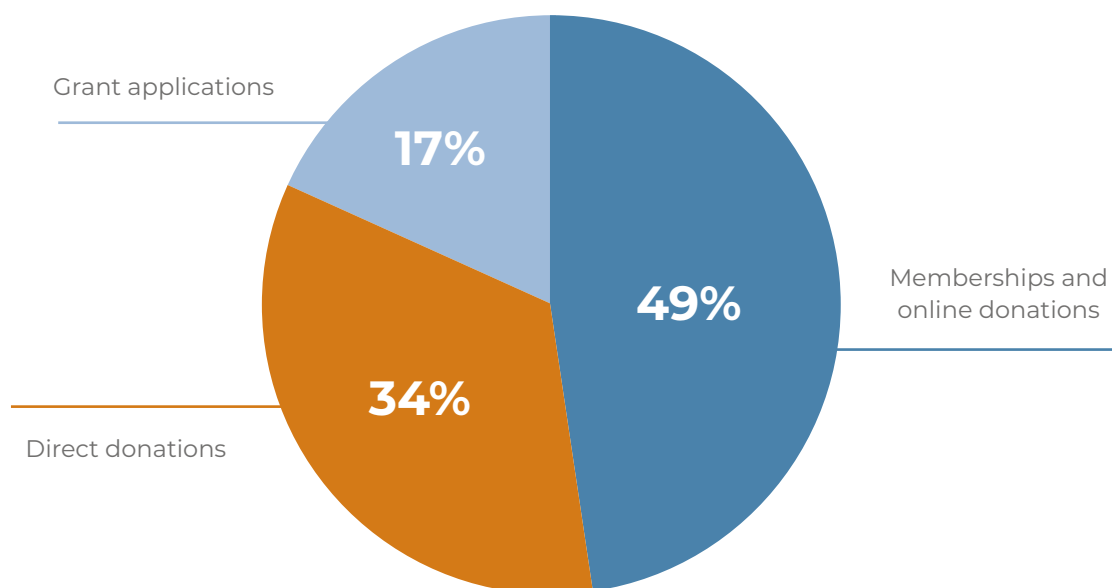


# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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## Financials at a Glance

Sources of Support



How we use our funds

