



It starts on an African farm



Your Ripple Effect update - autumn 2025

WELCOME TO YOUR AUTUMN NEWSLETTER!

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Cedric loves looking after his family's goats. His mother, Alphonsine, is one of many farmers in Rwanda taking part in our Restore project.



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KAZE

(Welcome in
Kirundi)

Dear Readers,

I'm delighted to connect with you through this newsletter.

My name is Gloria Nimpundu and I'm the country director of Ripple Effect Burundi. I joined the organisation 11 years ago and have been committed together with my team to improving the livelihoods of poor smallholder farmers. Burundi is a small land-locked country with 70% of the population living under the poverty line. Half of all children are malnourished, and the country is ranked among the most vulnerable in the world to climate change.

Ripple Effect Burundi is currently working with more than 10,000 families by equipping them with skills and resources to sustainably increase farm production, nourish their families and sell their surplus to cover their other needs.

In the face of the climate crisis, we are building farmers' resilience by promoting agroecology practices that protect the environment.

This year, we have initiated our two-year multi-country Restore project. It is supporting smallholder farmers around Lake Cyohoha bordering with Rwanda, to inclusively and equitably protect and regenerate ecosystems and improve livelihoods. It is also an opportunity to exchange lessons learnt across the countries.

I'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who donated to our match funding Restore appeal in the summer – your generosity will support farmers to restore their land for a future free from hunger.

Last year we started the third phase of our GANCA project, which you can find out more about in this newsletter.

Irregular rainfall, limited access to good quality seeds, a high inflation rate of 30% and fuel shortages bring operational challenges to project implementation. Despite these challenges, the farmers we work with are still experiencing enormous improvement in their lives.

This harvest season, we're deeply grateful for your valued support. Because of you, families in Burundi and across the African countries where we work are not just surviving - they're thriving. We hope you'll continue to stand with us to help even more families grow brighter, sustainable futures.

Best wishes,

Gloria Nimpundu

Country Director, Ripple Effect Burundi

Front cover: Delphine and her baby, Igirubuntu Christa, with freshly harvested potatoes from the land she farms with her community group in Burundi. Discover how your support is making a difference for them on page 5.

2025 SPRING APPEAL UPDATE



Clementine with
her children
outside their
home in Uganda.

**SPRING
APPEAL**



HOW YOUR GENEROSITY HAS SUPPORTED MOTHERS LIKE CLEMENTINE

By Abraham Obwakori, Project
Manager for Ripple Effect Uganda

I want to say a big thank you to everyone who donated to our Spring Appeal earlier this year. Together you helped us raise £41,320 so mothers can grow thriving gardens, harvest healthy crops and feed their families.

Our appeal introduced Clementine, a single mother and Rwandan refugee living in Uganda. She was struggling to grow enough to feed her children on a small plot of land depleted by the weather extremes and climate shocks. Her family were surviving on one meal a day which usually consisted of just flour and water. With no formal education, no stable income, and no partner to lean on, Clementine's life as a refugee woman became a daily battle against poverty and isolation.

Thanks to donations from people like you, Ripple Effect began working alongside Clementine to support her to overcome the challenges she was facing. She joined the Dukundane group, a community-based initiative supported by our Agriculture Market Support (AMS) project, which became a lifeline. Through the project Clementine was introduced to a self-reliance

model – a holistic approach designed to empower refugees and vulnerable host community members to rebuild their lives with dignity.

The project empowered Clementine by focusing on three critical areas: financial inclusion, mindset transformation, and enterprise development. **She received training in Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA), where she learned how to save, lend, and manage money collectively.** For someone who had spent years surviving day to day, the concept of saving was revolutionary. But Clementine embraced it with determination.



Clementine tending to her garden.

Today, she proudly speaks of her “good savings”, a modest but powerful symbol of her regaining control. These savings

have enabled her to invest in small-scale farming, purchase seeds and buy essential household items like soap, school supplies, and clothes for her children. She no longer waits for aid. She contributes to her group's fund, borrows responsibly, and repays with pride.

Access to small loans through the VSLA has been equally life-changing.

Clementine has used these loans to expand her garden, buy a goat, and even start a small side business selling vegetables. The investments, though humble, have created a ripple effect, improving her family's nutrition, generating income, and restoring her sense of purpose.

The AMS project's self-reliance model is tailored to the realities of refugee life. It recognises that long-term displacement requires more than temporary relief, it demands sustainable solutions. By equipping participants with practical skills, access to financial tools, and a supportive community, the project helps individuals like Clementine transition from dependency to independence.

Clementine's story is not just about survival, it's about transformation. She dreams of expanding her farming

activities, educating her children beyond the level she reached, and one day owning a home built not from charity, but from her own resilience. She told me:

“I used to wait for help. Now, I help myself. I save, I plan, and I believe in tomorrow.”

Clementine's journey is powerful and uplifting. She has taken back control of her future and has inspired other people who are still finding their way.



Clementine with her children who normally follow her to the garden.

POTATO POWER: PLANTING THE PATH TO PROSPERITY IN BURUNDI

How phase three of our Gender and Nutrition Centred Agriculture (GANCA) project is supporting farmers to thrive

Members of the Abahizi Community Group in Burundi with their first potato harvest.



Last year, we launched phase three of our GANCA project in Burundi. It is supporting vulnerable smallholder farmers to create sustainable access to nutritious food and boost their income to better support their families.

The project is also empowering women and marginalised groups to take an active role in improving food security and livelihoods – helping to build more inclusive, resilient households and communities.

What smallholder farmers in Burundi are up against

High levels of poverty:

Burundi is one of the poorest nations in the world. In the rural areas where we work, 76% of people live in poverty.

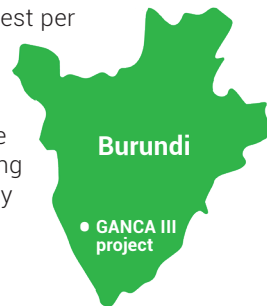
Food insecurity:

The country has incredibly high levels of hunger and malnutrition. Over half of the population are chronically food insecure, and 52% of children under the age

of five are stunted. About 90% of the population rely on agriculture for food and income, meaning families urgently need support.

Vulnerability to climate change:

Despite having the lowest per capita greenhouse gas emissions in the world, Burundi is highly vulnerable to the climate crisis, worsening the problems of poverty and food insecurity.



Drought, flooding, soil degradation and lack of access to the skills and knowledge needed to adapt are posing huge challenges to the livelihoods of smallholder farmers.

Gender inequality:

Women do not have the opportunity to participate in decision-making or in managing and protecting natural resources, despite being disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change (they tend to carry the main burden of agricultural activity and are also responsible for meeting the household needs for food, water and fuel).

Sowing success: Abahizi Community Group celebrate their first potato harvest

Abahizi Community Group face similar challenges to many small-holder farmers in Burundi. Goldien, the group's chair, shared:

"We face issues relating to climate change. We experience extreme drought followed by heavy rains often mixed with hail. We also suffer from crop diseases which are made worse because of

climate change, we didn't used to see this before."

They have also struggled with access to good quality seeds, fertilisers, and markets where they can sell their produce. But after the group joined the third phase of our GANCA project, things began to improve thanks to the generosity of supporters like you. Goldien told us:

"Ripple Effect came as a response to this. ... Firstly, we got better quality seeds of beans and potatoes. We got practical farming training such as agroecological practices. We also got fruit trees such as Japanese plum, passion fruit and avocados. We started a group Village Savings and Loan Association and received a kit including a calculator and record book."

As they harvested their first crop of potatoes, group member Delphine told us: *"When we started, we couldn't see how far we would come. But today we are glad as we can see the progress. ... We will be harvesting our beans next month and hope to get a ton from the 30 kilos that we planted. ... We are thankful to Ripple Effect for supporting us."*

As a way of ensuring their community is supported outside of the group, they will



Delphine with the beans the group will soon be harvesting.

give 10kg of potatoes from their harvest to vulnerable people such as those living with a disability. Delphine said *"From this production, vulnerable people and people with disabilities must benefit."*

After they have sold their first potato harvest, the group intend to purchase supplies to further improve their land. Looking to the future, they hope to earn enough to buy a bigger plot. And as a way of tackling the lack of access to good quality seeds, they plan to act as seed producers for other farmers, providing a beacon of hope in the community.



Mercy proudly showcasing
the dairy business she set up.

DAIRY, DETERMINATION AND A BRIGHTER FUTURE:

Mercy's story from Uganda

Thanks to your support, young people in Uganda are building brighter futures through dairy farming.

Our Youth Inclusive Dairy Market Systems (YIDaMS) project is empowering 50,000 young women and men (aged 18–35) with the skills, knowledge, and opportunities they need to build sustainable careers in Uganda's rapidly growing dairy farming sector.

Thanks to support from people like you, they're learning how to improve farming practices, increase milk production, and strengthen their food security.

By opening up access to quality dairy education and creating pathways to jobs and entrepreneurship, your generosity is not only supporting individual livelihoods – its helping entire communities thrive. The YIDaMS project is also expanding access to markets for dairy products and services.

THE IMPACT SO FAR

Thanks to your kind support and the commitment of thousands of young participants, YIDaMS has made remarkable progress. As of February 2025:

26,367 young people have received practical training from skilled artisans

4,438 have been trained through farm schools

OVER 1.7 MILLION litres of milk have been sold, generating UGX 2.39 billion (£491,040.26) in income

23,113 participants are now self-employed, and 1,155 have secured paid employment

How Ripple Effect is working alongside Mercy as part of the YIDaMS project.

When Mercy joined the YIDaMS Project, she began with specialised training in yogurt production, along with business

and savings education. Despite difficult personal circumstances, with determination and the right support, she turned this opportunity into a thriving enterprise.

Today, Mercy is not just a businesswoman and mother of three – she's a leader in her community. She produces 1,000 litres of yogurt each week, earns additional income from products like ghee and fresh milk, and has even expanded into selling yogurt-making equipment.

She has set up an incubation, a production room, packaging room, and yoghurt bar, and has opened a store and another selling point locally.

Mercy also now employs a team of 14 young people, sends her children to school and provides a stable future for her family. But her impact doesn't stop there.

Mercy trains young people in yogurt production, hosts interns, and even sponsors a weekly radio programme called "Youth Chat", where she and other project participants discuss youth employment and wellbeing. This helps to both empower others and promote her business.

Photos in Mercy's office showing how her business has progressed.



Thanks to your support, a generation of young entrepreneurs are reshaping Uganda's dairy sector - creating jobs and lasting change in their communities.

Mercy with her milk products.



RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE AGAINST THE ODDS IN ZAMBIA

By Matomola Matomola, Monitoring and Evaluation Programme Officer for
Zambian Rainbow Development
Foundation (ZRDF), Ripple
Effect's partner in Zambia



In January 2024 the worst drought in 40 years began in Zambia. Six weeks later, the nation's President declared it an emergency and a national disaster. The devastating drought lasted for many months, affecting more than 1 million farming families who depend on rain-fed agriculture.

Not enough rain meant not enough water for crops, drinking or livestock. This led to catastrophic crop failure – over 1 million hectares of maize was lost. Food shortages, dehydration and an increase in livestock deaths meant over 6.6 million Zambians became food insecure. Rivers were drying up. The country, which relies on hydroelectric power, was being plunged into darkness.

The impact of the drought meant the farmers we work with struggled as the crops they relied on failed. They were very worried about how they would be able to feed their families.

At the time, Brandy Mungaila, the Director of Zambian Rainbow Development Foundation (ZRDF), said ***"Many farmers say they have never seen weather like this in their lifetime. They are struggling to survive. Crops have dried out and are yielding very little at all... The drought has plunged over 6 million people into varying degrees of food insecurity."***

Against the odds, some of the farmers in our projects were able to demonstrate resilience through the drought because of the techniques they had learned with ZRDF.

Although inconsistent, the rains finally began in October, and by the end of January this year they had begun in earnest, with farmers optimistic for the 2025 harvest season.



Ripple Effect farmer Oliver in his drought affected maize field in Zambia in 2024.

Harvesting started in May and went much better than last year, with some of the farmers we work alongside reporting above average yields.

Turning hardship into hope



Luckson with his bountiful soya bean harvest earlier this year.

Luckson is a lead (peer) farmer in Momboshi Community. Like many other farmers, he faced serious challenges during last year's drought, so couldn't provide enough food for his household. Luckson turned to sustainable household practices he learned through ZRDF training to overcome this. He used keyhole gardens which enabled his

family to grow various locally available drought-resistant vegetables, so they had the right nutrition during difficult times.

Fortunately, the most recent farming season has been much better for Luckson. He recorded above-average yields in soya beans, maize, and sunflower production. Reflecting on the season, he shared ***"This season has been good and has improved both my food and income levels. I plan to invest in other income-generating activities."***

Luckson's story highlights the resilience of smallholder farmers, and the value of knowledge and support in overcoming climate-related challenges.

A tale of two harvests

Nemah is a dedicated farmer from the Momboshi community, with nine years' experience in agriculture. In the past, her biggest challenge was the lack of capital, which limited her ability to cultivate larger portions of land. However, with support from ZRDF Nemah has been able to expand her farming activities, growing enough to feed her household and produce a surplus for sale.

The last farming season was particularly difficult for her because of poor harvests



Nemah with her maize harvest.

caused by the drought. Despite this setback, however, the current farming season has brought renewed hope. With favourable conditions and continued support, Nemah has recorded a good harvest. Her family's food security has improved significantly, easing the struggle they previously faced.



REGENERATIVE FARMING IN THE UK AND AFRICA

By Guy Singh-Watson

I started my business, Riverford Organic Farmers, nearly 40 years ago after becoming disillusioned with chemical-intensive farming on my family's land. What began as a solo mission delivering organic veg to friends has grown into a co-owned business delivering to over 70,000 households a week. For me, organic farming has always been about working with nature, not against it: building soil health, respecting biodiversity, and producing food without trashing the planet.

But even after decades in the field, I still find myself learning – and nowhere more so than on my visits to East Africa with Ripple Effect. On my third trip – 25 years after my first – I came home struck not only by the resilience and ingenuity of the farmers I met, but by how much we in the UK could learn from them.

In a world grappling with climate breakdown, biodiversity collapse and failing food systems, it's clear to me that, if properly supported, small-scale agroecological farming offers one of the most hopeful paths forward. In East Africa, I saw how

Guy in Kenya visiting Ripple Effect projects – November 2024

smallholder farmers can produce more and better food, regenerate degraded land, adapt to a changing climate when given the right training and tools – and do it all while maintaining dignity, autonomy and community.

There is an ecological sophistication in these farms that I rarely see in the UK. From composting and livestock integration to pest control and soil conservation, these farmers understand their land intimately. Synthetic fertilisers are prohibitively expensive and often create long-term damage. Instead, farmers working with Ripple Effect are trained in making high-quality compost with dung and crop residues, building soil fertility and resilience to drought in the process.

Livestock play a central role, not just in providing food and income but also in supporting soil health. It was striking to see dairy cows with double the productive lifespan of the average UK cow, fed on local forage rather than imported grain or soya. The whole system is cyclical and local – unlike the extractive, linear systems we often see here in the Global North.

Pest control was perhaps where I was most humbled. One farmer, trained by Ripple Effect, explained how he rarely uses even natural pesticides – and considers it a failure if he must. Instead, he manages his farm's ecology carefully to keep pests in balance.

Many had adopted a technique known as 'Push-Pull', intercropping maize with legumes and grasses that repel or trap destructive pests. I was sceptical until I saw it working with my own eyes: fields devastated on one side, thriving on the other.

But perhaps most impressive of all is Ripple Effect's work on social change. **Their inclusion programme – especially on rebalancing gender roles – is something we in the UK should pay close attention to.** I've sat through hours of diversity training with little result. Yet here, a simple exercise using stones and a grid to map out household tasks leads to deep, lasting change in who does what, who makes decisions and who benefits.

These farmers are not just surviving – they're thriving, innovating and sharing their knowledge across communities. And they're doing so

Guy talking with Joseph, a farmer from one of our projects in Kenya. You can read about Joseph's story in our 2025 spring newsletter by visiting rippleeffect.org/newsletters



with remarkable dignity, often with few resources but a great deal of insight.

My visit reminded me that agroecology is not a luxury for the wealthy; rather, it's a necessity for the future. We would do well to listen, learn and apply some of that wisdom here at home.

FROM RAINBOWS TO RIPPLES: A VOLUNTEER'S STORY

Dr Rachel Lyons' journey with Ripple Effect began in a Kenyan hospital, where - while on a medical placement - she painted butterflies and rainbows to brighten a children's ward. But as recovered patients returned to the same poverty that made them ill, she knew more lasting change was needed.

In 1999, Rachel came across Send a Cow (now Ripple Effect) and discovered that we support families to grow their own food, earn a stable income, and build sustainable futures. **Then in 2005 she became a volunteer Ambassador** (Ambassadors make up Ripple Effect's volunteer network across the UK - local champions who are often the charity's first point of contact in their communities.) We're incredibly thankful to Rachel for her amazing support over the past 20 years.

Over two decades, Rachel's role has evolved with her life. Early on, she booked talks months ahead, spoke at

Women's Institute and Rotary groups, and hosted stalls at events. Now a busy mum of three, she finds ways to weave Ripple Effect into everyday life - sharing gift catalogues at the school gate or chatting at community fairs.

"One of the things I love is how flexible it is," she says. "Ripple Effect fits into your life - not the other way around."

Rachel's energy shines through her volunteering - from puppet cow school demos and keyhole gardens at festivals, to being sponsored for running the Great North Run and for going a whole month without sugar. **A 2006 visit to Rwanda brought the impact to life. "I'd walked through farmers' gardens and shared tea with their families. It wasn't just inspiring - it was real."**

"I believe in Ripple Effect," Rachel says. "They've always been ahead of the curve on sustainability and farming. Every hour I've given - every talk, cake sale, or assembly - has felt worth it."

If Rachel's story has inspired you, visit rippleeffect.org/get-involved to discover how you can be part of lasting change.

Rachel at the hospital where she works as an A&E doctor.



Your donation in support of farming families

☐ £10 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 Other

1 Your details

Title & full name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone:

Mobile:

Email:

We'd love to keep you updated on the impact of your support and share ways you can get involved—through donating, fundraising, or volunteering. **Let us know by ticking the boxes below to ensure you don't miss out:**

- ☐ **Yes**, I'd like to hear from you by **email**
- ☐ **Yes**, I'd like to hear from you by **sms**

If you would like to update the way we contact you, please call us on 01225 874 222 / 01225 688 222 or email supporter@rippleeffect.org. Find out more at rippleeffect.org/privacy

2 Your method of payment

☐ I've enclosed a cheque/postal order/charity voucher made payable to **Ripple Effect**

☐ I'd like to pay by card, my details are below:

Name as it appears on card:

Card No:

☒ CAF Card Expiry Date:

3 Boost your support by 25% at no extra cost with Gift Aid

Gift Aid allows Ripple Effect to claim 25p extra in each £1 you donate from HMRC at no extra cost to you. **Please tick the box below** and complete your details to help make your support go even further.

☐ **Yes**, I am a UK taxpayer and want Ripple Effect to claim Gift Aid on this donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference. Please let us know if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name/address or if you are no longer a UK taxpayer.

☐ **No**, I am not a UK taxpayer or do not want Ripple Effect to claim Gift Aid on my support.

Signature:

Date:

Your donation will be used wherever the need is greatest to support the farming families we work alongside in rural Africa.

Please complete and return this form to: Ripple Effect, Runway East / Kings Court, Parsonage Lane, Bath, BA1 1ER

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CONSIDER LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

Create a ripple effect for the generations to come

We believe no child should go hungry in Africa. All children should have the chance to grow up healthy and the opportunity to succeed in school. Parents should have access to the sustainable farming techniques and tools to build a secure future.

Leaving a gift in your Will today will help us get closer to a world where no child goes hungry.

And your legacy won't stop there. Every family your gift helps will go on to benefit many more families, growing their skills and confidence to fight hunger and the climate crisis. These families will also pass on their skills and knowledge to their communities, the next generation and beyond, creating a wave of change across rural Africa, breaking the cycle of poverty.

Through our partnership with Farewill, we have everything you need to make or update your Will for free.

To find out how we're working towards a rural Africa where no child goes hungry and how you can leave a gift in your Will to Ripple Effect, please contact us on the details below for a no-obligation chat.

If you've already left a gift in your Will for the families we work with, please drop us a line. We'd love to say thank you.



Firehiwot,
daughter
of a Ripple
Effect
farmer,
Ethiopia.



giftsinwills@rippleeffect.org



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RIPPLE EFFECT

It starts on an African farm