

## Community Gift policy



This policy covers all visits made by staff, trustees, volunteers, major donors, consultants, journalists and other individuals visiting projects in Africa on Ripple Effect business. A separate policy covers visitors to the UK.

### 1. Giving Gifts

The universal position of Ripple Effect, supported by staff in Africa and the UK, is that no personal or monetary gifts may be given directly or indirectly to members of Ripple Effect community groups.

This policy is to protect the dignity and independence of our farmers. It is normally regarded as an honour in Africa to receive guests, particularly those from Western countries, and no further gift is required to satisfy the host.

A key component of the Ripple Effect development process is to build confidence and self-respect through 'passing on the gifts.' To insist on giving a gift during a visit may seem polite and correct to the Westerner, but for the African farmer, it can reduce their status to 'beneficiary' and may be a reminder of the 'rich/poor' power dynamic.

Local Ripple Effect staff have previously seen gifts create a culture of expectancy and dependence on handouts. Ironically, gifts given with the best of intentions can undermine our work to encourage independence and entrepreneurialism. The most successful farmers are often the ones who have been given the fewest material goods, but who have made the most of their training.

We have evidence that singling out certain farmers to receive gifts, no matter how small, can create division and resentment within community groups. Community group support and cohesion is absolutely critical to the success of Ripple Effect's approach to development and therefore must not be jeopardised by individual gifts.

It is a very natural and compassionate response to want to help after meeting very poor people. Often, the obvious response would seem to be to offer to fix a problem there and then (e.g. "I'll give you the money to buy some chickens"). However, this may not be the best long-term solution for the individual in question.

Ripple Effect staff who have spent years helping people work their way out of poverty and who understand the local cultures we work within are the best people to advise how to make a difference. After visiting a community group, Ripple Effect UK staff may be consulted to explore the most appropriate way to provide support.

### Exceptions

- Visitors may give or send greetings cards but must not include their return address
- Visitors may give small gifts of appreciation to local Ripple Effect staff up to a maximum value of £5 per gift
- If dining out, visitors may offer to pay for food and/or drinks for local Ripple Effect staff
- Very small gifts to overseas staff to show appreciation for hosting.

## 2. Receiving Gifts

If visitors are given gifts by a community group, these are normally small, such as fruit, honey, handicraft or vegetables. They may have little monetary value but embody symbolic significance, where a refusal would cause real offence. Unless the gift has a nominal value of over £50 the recipient will be free to keep it or give it away at their discretion. More infrequently the gift may be more substantial, such as livestock (a chicken or goat, for instance). In this situation, the gift should still be accepted and handed over to Ripple Effect in-country.

### Commitment

All staff, trustees, volunteers, major donors, consultants, journalists and other individuals visiting Ripple Effect projects will be asked to sign an acceptance form before leaving the UK stating they understand and will adhere to this policy.

### Consequences

Individuals who are found to have made an individual financial gift will be asked to pay an administration fee to Ripple Effect UK to cover associated staff time and expenses. This will be equal to 75% of the value of the original gift.

Any individual who is found to have given unapproved financial or personal gifts will not be permitted to make further visits to Ripple Effect programmes. Equally, any individual who is found to have received a substantial gift (as defined above) that has not been declared or handed over as appropriate will also not be permitted to make further visits to Ripple Effect programmes.

Version	Modified by	Changes Made	Approval by SLT	Date
1.0	Donald Mavunduse	Update to Ripple Effect	Donald Mavunduse	Jan 2023

*Version 1.0*

*Ripple Effect reserves the right to review, revise, amend or replace the contents of this policy to reflect the changing needs of the charity.*