

PROJECT SUMMARY: RESTORE

Focus:	Restoring land and protecting natural resources around Lake Cyohoha for future generations. Increasing crop yields and improving ways for families to earn a living.
Location:	Burundi (Kirundo Province) and Rwanda (Bugesera District) – working alongside communities living around Lake Cyohoha.
Target Impact:	2,000 households.



Jeanne gesturing towards Lake Cyohoha, which this project will help restore.

The challenge

Soil erosion and over-exploitation has left the land around Lake Cyohoha depleted, stripping away smallholder farmers' ability to grow food, and leaving them vulnerable to climate shocks like drought and flooding. Local communities are suffering from hunger and poverty – they can't grow enough food to feed their families, let alone to generate what would be their only source of income.

What is the impact of this?

- Families face hunger and malnutrition because they struggle to grow enough healthy crops in degraded soil.
- The primary water source for local communities has become polluted and is losing biodiversity.



The solution

1. Farmers taking part in the Restore project will receive training in how to protect and regenerate their natural resources, including soil and water, through activities such as reducing pollution, controlling erosion and tree planting.
2. Farmers will learn how to grow more crops and raise healthier livestock by using sustainable farming techniques like terracing, composting, and planting food and fodder crops together.
3. Households will be empowered to increase their income by learning to add value to their produce and by building connections with local markets.

Expected impact at the end of the project:

- **800 hectares of land** will be restored.
- **75% of women** will be more involved in decision-making around the use of natural resources like water.
- **80% of self-help groups** will be food secure.
- **78% of households** will be eating six or more food types.
- **60% of households** will be earning more income each day.



MEET JEANNE

Jeanne lives on the shore of Lake Cyohoha. She's joined the Restore project in the hope that she can restore the land she works on, increase her crop yields, and build a brighter future for her children.

"If we don't take care of the soil and the environment, it may cause us losses such as our soil being wiped away to Cyohoha. Our crops may be washed away too."

OUR APPROACH

Natural resource management

We will work alongside local communities to increase their understanding of why soil and water conservation is important. Training will focus on how farmers can prevent soil erosion by helping the soil retain water and nutrients. This will include setting up terraces and planting trees to bind soil and slow down water run-off. By attending volunteer peer farmer training, farmers will learn how to share their new skills within their communities.

Improved crop yields

Climate-smart techniques will include composting, mulching and intercropping, in order to boost soil fertility, increase water retention and reduce the need for chemical fertilisers.

To kick start productivity in restored soils, farmers will be provided with drought-resistant vegetable and fruit seed varieties, which will enable them to grow sufficient food all year round to eat and sell. To help farmers reduce losses caused by pests and diseases that thrive in extreme climatic conditions, they will also learn about natural pest control methods, removing the need for expensive and environmentally harmful chemical pesticides which have already damaged the lake.

Alternative livelihoods

Project staff will mentor farmers to explore green business opportunities and new income streams. Training in post-harvest techniques will reduce losses and add value to crops. Small livestock placements (e.g. poultry, goats) will help build stable, long-term income. Healthier animals will also improve nutrition and offer products for sale.

The multi-country nature of the project model creates exciting potential for the sharing of learning and best practice between two Ripple Effect country programmes. This will help to improve efficiencies and reach more families with life-changing training.



Speciose with seedlings to plant on her farm.



Therese with avocados she has grown.



Therese's son Eric collecting milk to sell in the community.



Alphonsine, Project Manager for Restoration

"This project will restore land and ecosystems around Cyohoha lake. This is an area that has been significantly impacted by climate change. Smallholder farmers are challenged by drought and unpredictable rains. Water for household use is really far away. Through this project we'll see protected land, improved farming practices and better food security. I'm motivated by the change I've seen in other parts of the country and I know it's possible to support rural communities in this area to change their lives too."

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