

ZRDF – Ripple Effect Partnership

The ZRDF–Ripple Effect partnership works with over 8,000 smallholder farming households in rural Zambia to build resilience to climate change and strengthen food and financial security.



Agnes, project participant,
in her field

**RIPPLE
EFFECT**

It starts on an African farm

Location: Mkushi and Luano districts, Zambia

Duration: 2023 - 2027

Delivery partner: Zambian Rainbow Development Foundation (ZRDF)

THE CHALLENGE

In Mkushi and Luano, many farmers have limited access to agricultural support, while overuse of land has degraded soils and reduced productivity. Poor roads can make it harder to get produce to markets, and droughts and floods are becoming an increasing threat. Limited access to financial services and enterprise opportunities can also make it difficult for families to invest in their farms or develop other sources of income.

OUR APPROACH

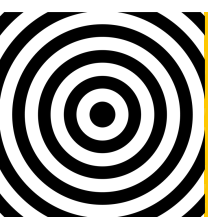
The partnership brings farming families together through community groups to build climate-resilient farms, supporting stable incomes and food security. The project also emphasises gender and social inclusion, and works closely with schools for community-led development that benefits the next generations.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Climate-smart farming
- Food & nutrition
- Income & enterprise
- Women empowerment
- Schools & education



Susan and her husband in their sunflower field





CLIMATE-SMART FARMING

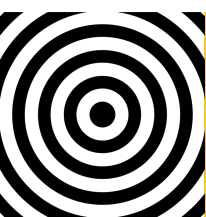
Farmers learn agroecological approaches that improve soil health and make better use of the resources available on their farms. Training includes practical techniques such as composting, mulching, crop diversification, water conservation and natural pest management.

Farmers put these techniques into practice on their own land and learn from one another through the Lead Farmer approach. Trained farmers establish demonstration gardens where others can see sustainable farming methods in practice and develop their own skills.

The project also supports farmers to adapt their production to climate pressures. During the 2023-24 drought, Nemah used sustainable farming techniques and drought-resistant crops to maintain food production and harvest a surplus of soya beans for sale. Strengthening farmers' knowledge and capacity in this way can make farms more resilient to droughts and other climate shocks.



Nemah, project participant, in her maize field following the 2023-24 drought





FOOD & NUTRITION

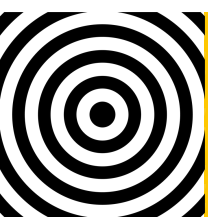
Producing enough varied and nutritious food can be difficult when families face low farm productivity and unpredictable weather. The project supports farmers to diversify what they grow, particularly through sustainable kitchen gardens, so households have more opportunities to produce food for themselves while selling surplus produce.

Alongside adopting agroecological practices that help grow more food in unpredictable climates, farmers learn the importance of diverse diets for health and nutrition, and choose a range of fruits and vegetables to plant on their farms.

Rebecca for example, has diversified her garden to grow vegetables including tomatoes, onions, spinach and okra after learning about agroecological farming and nutrition. She now produces enough vegetables for her household while selling surplus at the local market.



Rebecca, project participant, proudly holding vegetables she has grown





INCOME & ENTERPRISE

Limited financial inclusion and difficult access to markets can make it hard for farming families to turn their farming into a reliable income.

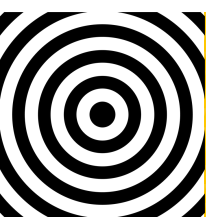
Through SILC groups, households develop a habit of saving together and can access affordable loans from their group funds to invest in productive activities or small enterprises. Members also build practical financial management skills, giving them greater control over how they save, borrow and use their money.

SILC groups can also develop into collective enterprises. For example, the Munema SILC group in Momboshi used enterprise development training and a government grant to invest in goat keeping. The group has since expanded its herd and continues to manage the enterprise collectively, creating another source of income for members.

The project also builds skills in enterprise development and value addition, enabling farmers and groups to explore ways of getting greater value from what they produce.



SILC group putting money aside for savings





WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

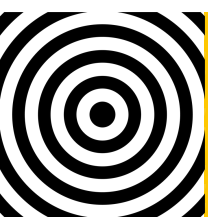
The project integrates gender and social inclusion throughout its work, creating opportunities for people who may otherwise be excluded to have a stronger voice in decisions that affect their lives.

The Transformative Household Methodology (THM) works directly with families to examine how responsibilities and decisions are shared within the home. Through household discussions and follow-up, family members can reflect on traditional roles and identify changes that create fairer relationships.

The project also uses the Access, Communication, Attitude and Participation (ACAP) tool to identify barriers faced by people living with disabilities and consider practical ways to increase their participation and independence. By working with households to challenge assumptions and identify practical solutions to exclusion, the project supports changes that can benefit everyone in the community and future generations.



Community gender volunteers holding a THM session with a family from the project





SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

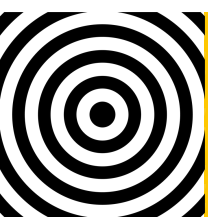
Through its partnership with ZRDF, Ripple Effect has supported the development of local schools, making it better and easier for children to attend. Improvements to school facilities can make education more accessible, while sanitation, clean water and menstrual hygiene support create a healthier environment for children, particularly girls.

At Momboshi Primary School, menstrual hygiene management training gives girls practical knowledge about managing their periods with greater confidence and dignity. Girls also learn how to make reusable sanitary pads, giving them a skill they can share with their families and communities and reducing the risk that menstruation becomes a barrier to attending school.



Primary school students taking a class

School children gain practical experience of growing food and learn about sustainable agriculture with the introduction of school farms and orchards. This also provides additional nutrition for pupils. What children learn at school can then travel home with them, giving families another route to new ideas and knowledge. In this way, investment in schools can benefit children while also strengthening the wider community, creating opportunities for knowledge to spread from one generation to the next.





Lameck, a project participant reflects:

"I learned that vegetables can provide income throughout the year, even before my maize and soybean are ready for harvest. The money I earn every week helps me provide for my family, while the vegetables improve the meals we eat at home."

ACHIEVEMENTS SO FAR



SINCE 2023

4 million

Zambian Kwacha saved
(approx £1.5 million GBP)
across 203 SILC groups

40,683

participants reached across
7,045 households (73% of total
partnership target)

49%

of households adopted at least
six sustainable agriculture
practices

Thank you to all supporters, partners, and staff who make this and other projects possible. Change starts with your support.

Discover more at:
rippleeffect.org

