

## Women of Migori update



Location: Migori, Western Kenya  
People supported: 64,800

### Summary

Thank you for supporting **Women of Migori** in Western Kenya. Ripple Effect has been working across Migori since 2017, where 94% of families supported through our Kakrao Sustainable Livelihoods project reported confidence that their farms can provide sufficient food and income. **Women of Migori** is building upon the learning and impact achieved in Kakrao, whilst harnessing the power of peer to peer learning, supporting families in nearby West Kanyamkago. Now in its second year, this four-year project will focus on food security, protecting water sources and building successful businesses.

### Our approach

Our proven approach brings farmers together to learn new skills and share knowledge and decision-making so they can improve their livelihoods and thrive. Farmers we work with learn more, grow more and sell more. They feed their families better, and by having a surplus to sell, can invest in their farms, send their children to school, and build sustainable agri-businesses. We support farmers in passing on what they know to family and neighbours. With community trainers and as peer farmers, they ensure more people can live and farm successfully, in communities where everyone plays a part and feels the benefits. Our method is efficient, effective and builds a momentum that spreads far beyond our programmes.

### Three pillars

We focus upon three pillars to empower individuals & communities to achieve lasting change:

**Farming the land:** we train farmers in using the best new and traditional approaches to agroecology, to build productive, biodiverse farms that are adapted to the changing climate and have a climate-positive impact.

**Including everyone:** we facilitate women and men sharing decisions and responsibilities equally, ensuring that people with different needs and abilities have the opportunity to learn more, grow more and sell more.

**Business skills:** farmers learn to manage their farm as a business, moving away from subsistence farming to control their own futures: developing profitable micro-businesses and co-operatives and agri-businesses which can access new markets.



Mary on her farm with tree seedling



## Farming the land

41 project farmers have been recruited and trained as Peer Farmer Trainers (PFT) to provide long-term support for Self Help Groups (SHG). PFTs cascade key training and support SHG members to implement new knowledge and skills. Training sessions included: sustainable agriculture; soil & water conservation; farm resource mapping, and the RSPCA's 5 Animal Freedoms for managing livestock.

Progress is positive, with farmers engaged in resource mapping increasing from 2% to 19%. Uptake of composting & agroforestry has **doubled** from 28-56% and water conservation has increased from 8-19%. Incredibly, reliance on chemical pesticides has **reduced** by over two thirds.



### Tree planting

Five schools and two community sites were identified for community tree planting, with 1,000 indigenous tree seedlings planted such as acacia, markhamia lutea, and bischofia. A tree planting plan was developed with local schools to involve children in the process, in line with the Kenya Forest Service Afforestation guidelines.



### Energy saving stoves

429 SHG households attended training on building energy saving stoves. These stoves use less wood for fuel, reducing time spent collecting firewood and mitigating the environmental impact of cutting trees. They also create a cleaner cooking environment as they emit less smoke and create healthier living conditions for families.



### Improving access to clean water

Nine springs have been protected bringing safe water for approximately **2,700** households. These springs are in addition to six others in the project area, meaning in total, approximately **4,500** households now have a protected water source. Each spring has solar lighting to improve security and safety for water collection during the dark.

## Thank you!

Last summer, we met on Zoom with Sylvia, Project Manager for Women of Migori. She asked if our church Mission Partners would raise funds for banana saplings and training to help transform the lives of the families we are working with. **Together, you have raised an astonishing £37,000 for this project!** Thank you for your love and prayers for both the families and Sylvia's team. We are blessed to have you as Mission Partners and I pray that God would bless you richly in your generosity.



Sylvia has now moved onto another role within Ripple Effect and Beatrice is now Project Manager for Women of Migori. There will soon be an opportunity to meet with her over Zoom and find out more about the project. I will let you know the full details soon.

## Including everyone

Our PFTs are playing a key role in increasing social resilience and challenging attitudes towards women and those with HIV. PFTs attended training on Ripple Effect's core principles of social inclusion, which has empowered them to act as inclusion champions within their communities. Topics include disability inclusion, gender relations and distribution of workloads, gender-based violence and safeguarding. Sessions also raised awareness of Covid-19, including symptoms and reducing transmission in the community, alongside the risks of Covid-19 in relation to gender-based violence and how families can resolve household tensions and pressures caused by Covid-19.



A community health outreach session

15 Community Health Volunteers (CHV) have been trained to deliver community health messages across the project area. Training focused on how families can produce nutritious food for their household, healthy processing and food storage, safe food preparation and the principles of a healthy diet for different stages of life (i.e. pregnant women and infants).

16 Peer Educators in West Kanyamkago received training which focused on HIV/AIDs support, both reducing transmission and empowering those who test positive to have dignified lives.

## Meet Miriam

Miriam, 62, lives with her husband and five grandchildren on her 0.5-acre farm in Migori, Western Kenya. She is a member of Khanyanje Women's Group, which supports members to grow bananas and vegetables, rear poultry, plant orchards and organise group savings and loans.

Before working with Ripple Effect, Miriam and her husband worked on other people's farms in order to provide for their orphaned grandchildren. Today Miriam grows maize, bananas, pawpaw, cassava, potatoes, beans and hot pepper! She sells to a company that collects produce from her farm and employs one person three days a week on the farm. During the planting and weeding season she now employs three to five others. She shared with us that today, her grandchildren are rarely ill and she can comfortably afford to pay for school fees.

**"Most of our income is from bananas and we want to plant more... I am happy I no longer work on other people's farms, instead I am an employer." Miriam, Migori**



## Business skills

50 SHG took part in enterprise development training sessions. Sessions included market identification, basic business and planning skills, record keeping, leadership & governance, savings and loans, and resource mobilisation. Community groups were also trained on the factors to consider when developing collective enterprises.

Representatives from all Group Management Committees (GMC) participated in training on identifying markets and how farmers can work together in collective marketing.

We are pleased to share that surplus production of crops and livestock is contributing to increased household income for families. Since the project started, farming families earning over \$2 a day has increased from 7-29% for SHG and 4-21% for community members which is very promising. The proportion of farmers involved in saving groups has also significantly increased from 30-90%. Also, the number of farming families engaged in four or more income-generating activities has increased from 38-53% for SHG.



Rose and her son Evans.

Rose's farm is flourishing and she is working with Ripple Effect to turn her thriving farm into a successful family business.



## Challenges and learnings

Severe flooding affected wide areas of Kenya from the start of the 'long rains' season, which resulted in some project farmers' crops being damaged or washed away. To minimise crop losses and build resilience to future climatic challenges, training on soil erosion control structures was increased. Additionally, Disaster Risk Reduction committees were established to mobilise community members and develop disaster mitigation plans to strengthen resilience in the future.

Delivering a project within the context of a global pandemic has been challenging. Western Kenyan counties, including Migori, suffered some very serious waves, forcing strict lockdowns. Restrictions on public gatherings and travel, delayed PFT training. It also affected the meetings of SHG, saving groups and committees. Training had to be deferred, or delivered in smaller groups. An emphasis was given to training peer educators e.g. PFTs and CHVs, to share the training within their communities (where project staff weren't able to travel). This meant that the training wasn't as wide as the original project plan. Covid lockdown measures also affected market access for farmers, reducing their ability to sell surplus produce and increase household income.

Despite these challenges, progress continues to be made. Thank you for being part of this incredible work! For more information contact [ann.hatton@rippleeffect.org](mailto:ann.hatton@rippleeffect.org)