Discover more about the people you could support this Harvest, and the changes you can help them make in their lives. For women like Kamala, the EcoVeg project is a lifeline.

**Kamala’s story**

Today, Kamala (pictured below) started her working day at dawn. For every hour of hard, physical work, she earns less than 20p. She has worked as a farmer and farm labourer for almost 25 years, but since she was widowed, it has been much harder to meet basic needs or to get her younger children through school.

‘They dream of having a career and studying engineering or medicine,’ says Kamala. ‘I don’t read or write. They should not have to suffer the way I have had to.’

Kamala, along with millions of other people in India, belongs to a social group known as the Dalits.

People in the Dalit community are born into poverty and discrimination: India’s caste system makes it difficult for them to improve their lives. Women in particular do not have the rights or voice to secure a sustainable, independent future for themselves.

Most people Kamala knows work in the jobs that no-one else wants to do - in punishing conditions in the chemical factories, as labourers on other people’s farms, digging ditches or cleaning the roadside.

Chemical farming in particular comes with many problems. People in the community tell us that the chemicals damage their lungs and skin, causing lesions and cancers. Farmers who rely on expensive chemical products need to use more and more, which pushes them into debt.

Before the last light fades on her long day, Kamala hurries out to harvest her own small field that she has set up with the help of the EcoVeg project. Organic farming could mean more income for the household, for healthcare or education.

The project is her lifeline - her chance to keep her children in school, and offer them a better life.
“Chemical farming makes you dependent, it damages the soil and the environment.”
Alagumayil, farmer from Tamil Nadu, southern India

Chemical farming is in a downward spiral. But the demand for natural, nutritious food is growing: the market for organic food in India is set to treble by 2021.

The EcoVeg project has seen an opportunity to help people like Kamala. By teaching people from excluded communities natural farming techniques, the project seeks to equip them to take advantage of the growing demand for naturally grown food.

EcoVeg provides business training and education in organic farming methods. It supplies marketing know-how, and sets up the infrastructure to get food packed, transported, and sold at a good price.

Through EcoVeg, Kamala can learn about:

- developing organic farming as a business
- producing natural fertilizers, plant tonics and pesticides
- preserving, planting and propagating seeds.

So far, EcoVeg has reached nearly 5,000 farmers. Over one-third are from excluded communities; 47% are women. While many still do some day-labour, EcoVeg improves their working and living conditions and strengthens their social status. It provides the means for collective savings schemes and improves children’s chances of better nutrition and education.

The EcoVeg project is a lifeline, helping people to break free from poverty. Will you support more people around the world, as they build a future for themselves?

£60 could train 20 women to start their own farming business - breaking down barriers and building their self-belief.

£150 could give 10 families enough seeds for a full season of crops, grown naturally and without harmful chemicals.

£300 could build an EcoVeg hub, so farmers from miles around get their crops weighed, packed, and sold for a fair price.