

In Their Lifetime

**Innovation, impact
and lasting change**

Impact review 2009-2025

**christian
aid**

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16 years of impact



Dear friend,

I'm delighted to introduce this long-term impact report. In Their Lifetime (ITL) has served as a foundation for innovation for over 16 years now, investing in pockets of brilliance and providing local partners and communities with a launchpad for their ideas and initiatives.

I've been at Christian Aid throughout this time and have seen how ITL has shaped our wider work, introducing new tools and approaches that we and others across the sector have adopted and scaled up, from climate forecasting to clean energy entrepreneurship. Ideas that were once cutting edge are now standard practice, and ITL has played a key role in making this happen.

In many instances, approaches trialled by ITL projects were extended and scaled up by local or national governments, or by large institutional donors. On other occasions, projects have shaped structures that continue to drive development in their communities today, from village committees in Sierra Leone to rapid response teams in Ethiopia.

Projects have also led to enduring changes in policy or power structures – from more women in politics and business leadership to policy changes that benefit entire sectors, such as coffee farmers in Burundi or tea farmers in Bangladesh. These long-term impacts extend far beyond the scope of the original projects, in both location and duration.

You have enabled many successes and I hope that, as you read this report, you feel proud of the ideas that you have helped to ignite and the changes you have made possible. But testing new ideas inevitably brings risk, as does working in violent or volatile contexts. We aim to mitigate risks as far as possible, but when things don't go to plan, we welcome learning from failure as well as success.

For example, for some peacebuilding and governance projects – inherently ITL's most risky work – conflict or repression have since undone many project impacts, and there are critical learnings in the elements that have endured, and also in those that have not. Other key learnings came from our early markets work, when we sometimes underestimated the level of analysis, support and training needed to empower poor producers to forge sustainable independent businesses. As many later projects show, we applied that learning to hone and improve our approach.

Throughout this journey, your support and engagement have been critical, enabling projects that have pushed the boundaries and, crucially, have proved a catalyst for wider, long-lasting change.

Thank you for your support.

Ray Hasan
Director of Impact, Christian Aid

Above: Ray Hasan presents HM The King with honey from Nyuki Hubs in Kenya, at a reception marking Christian Aid's 80th anniversary.

ITL projects across the world

In Their Lifetime is Christian Aid's seed fund for innovation and learning. This global programme tests new ideas and approaches that have the potential to spark transformation. Since its foundation in 2009, it has connected creative local initiatives that need funding with forward-thinking individuals and organisations who want to drive change. So far, ITL supporters have donated over £14,000,000, enabling more than 40 projects and programmes in 23 countries around the world.

Business boosts

Our global social enterprise programme, which ran from 2015 to 2019, provided acceleration services to small businesses, supporting them to build skills and capacity. Working with fledgling enterprises that would otherwise struggle to access finance, investment or business support, the programme connected businesses directly with local technical and business consultancy services, and provided small booster grants and loans.



Climate adaptation and resilience

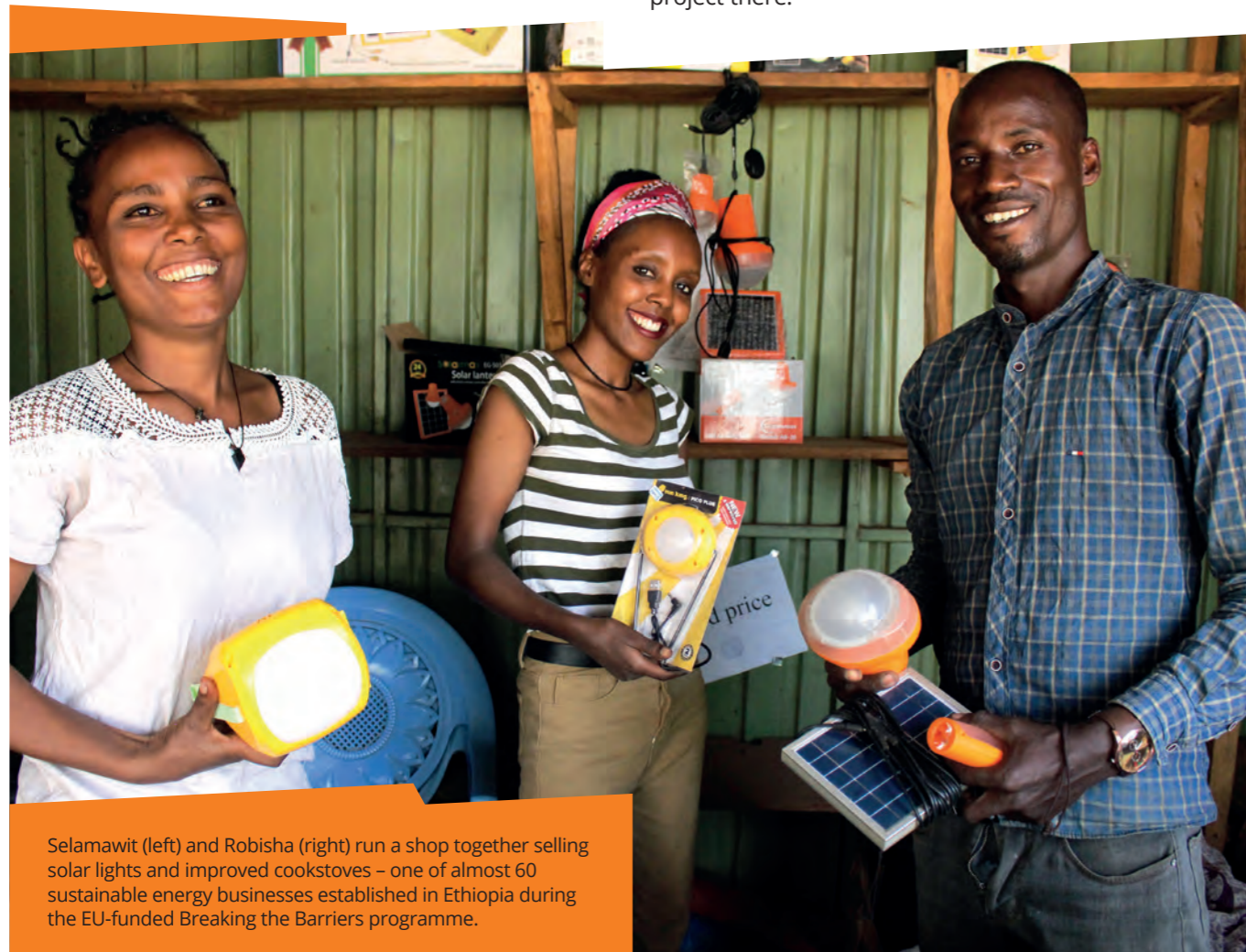
With the climate crisis hitting the poorest hardest, ITL projects have explored ways to build climate adaptation and resilience into sectors from farming to finance, and into everyday family life. With proof of concept, these approaches have often then been scaled up through government investment or large-scale projects funded by institutional donors.

Clean energy innovations

ITL's clean energy pilots influenced government agencies and institutional donors to scale up investment in sustainable energy enterprises.

ITL's first foray into clean energy work was our solar lamps project in India, from 2011 to 2013, which aimed to pilot community-run supply chains for loan-purchase solar lamps, providing a clean, affordable alternative to kerosene for off-grid rural communities.

The project also provided an advocacy platform to campaign for wider electricity access, and laid the foundations for partners in India to explore other clean energy initiatives, from solar-powered phone charging to biogas, building towards our current solar microgrid project there.



Selamawit (left) and Robisha (right) run a shop together selling solar lights and improved cookstoves – one of almost 60 sustainable energy businesses established in Ethiopia during the EU-funded Breaking the Barriers programme.

Learning from experience

However, in this early pilot, there was less demand for the lamps than expected, and key learnings around understanding demand, pricing and distribution channels fed directly into our next clean energy project – a multinational cleaner cookstoves programme which ran from 2014 to 2016.

Cleaner cookstoves use less firewood and emit less smoke than open fire cooking. Before starting work, we used ITL funding to assess the market in 10 different countries. This led us to focus on four – Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali and Nigeria – and to work simultaneously on both supply and demand to establish sustainable markets that could offer long-term solutions.

The project worked with producer groups, often women's self-help groups, to make, market and sell energy-efficient stoves while also raising awareness about their health and cost benefits, and providing low-interest loans to make them affordable for customers.

Long-term impact and influence

Building on our experience with cleaner cookstoves, Christian Aid secured a contract to deliver a major EU-funded programme to promote women's entrepreneurship in the sustainable energy sector. This £5.4 million programme, Breaking the Barriers, ran from 2018-2022 and reached over 770,000 people in four countries, including Ethiopia and Malawi.

Many of the producer groups involved in the cookstoves project also participated in Breaking the Barriers, turning their pottery and stove-making initiatives into fully independent businesses. In Ethiopia, the cookstoves project model was scaled up in new regions and inspired further investment. The government there is now actively promoting improved cookstoves, subsidising sales, encouraging adoption, and supporting stove producers in rural areas.



Escaping debt in Bangladesh

Our most recent project worked with microfinance lenders and borrowers in flood-prone areas, trialling ways to make loans more climate resilient and inclusive for women.



'I never thought I could save even 50 taka. Now I save 100 every week and run my own shop.'

Project participant (not pictured)

Project summary: With floods repeatedly destroying crops among low-lying riverside communities, our partner Gana Unnayan Kendra trialled ways to build resilience into microfinance systems. The project, which ran from 2022 to 2025, supported over 11,000 vulnerable borrowers, especially women, to develop more secure earning options, and avoid becoming trapped in debt.

Local legacy: 87% of women set up a business, establishing new, climate-smart income streams that should withstand future floods, boosting incomes and savings for long-term security. Among project communities, the major leap in women's ownership of assets – from 28% to 65% in just two years – reflects their growing status.

Wider impacts: The project also kickstarted institutional changes that will benefit microfinance customers for decades to come, as lenders become more responsive to climate risks – and also to women's needs. For example, one lender began allowing women to serve as guarantors for loans (instead of only men), while another introduced separate toilets and breastfeeding spaces. This project has only just ended, but the model is primed for scale. Findings from the project have reached national platforms and international forums, including COP29.

Forecasting growth in Kenya

SALI helped shape national climate services and Christian Aid's climate adaptation approach, unlocking millions of pounds in funding.

Project summary: SALI – the Support for Agricultural Livelihoods Initiative – ran from 2011 to 2016 with the Anglican Diocese of Mbeere and Traidcraft East Africa, supporting over 2,000 farmers in dry areas to adapt to the changing climate and increase their incomes. A pioneering text message climate information service, with seasonal, monthly and weekly forecasts, guided farming decisions.

Local legacy: Farmers transformed their approach and are still guided by the forecasting services set up by the project. With higher yields and prices, farmers' trust in the forecast led them to dramatically expand their farms, further increasing incomes. Within a few years, private sector partners had expanded the SMS forecasting system to reach over 50,000 farmers. The platform is now online and provides market information as well as weather forecasts.



The SALI project exceeded all targets around yields, profits and income. As farmers became more confident about the new approach, there was a dramatic increase in land under cultivation – more than six times the project target.

Wider impacts: SALI embedded the concept of climate adaptation and resilience into Christian Aid's livelihoods work, and fed specific insights about forecasting directly into future ITL climate resilience pilots. These included the Nicaragua and Ethiopia projects featured opposite, which both built on this foundation to trial new forecasting applications.

Our learnings and experience from SALI, including around connections with national Met Offices, local government structures and private sector partners, unlocked funding for large-scale resilience programmes in Malawi, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia. These were funded by the UK government, and other institutional donors, to the tune of £32 million. The programme in Ethiopia led directly to the creation of a National Framework for Climate Services.

'The lasting legacy of filtering down weather forecasting to the local level has been taken up by the government and other big stakeholders.'

Richard Ewbank, Christian Aid Global Climate Advisor

Within Kenya, SALI fed into and drove the uptake of government county climate services, later scaled up to become the Kenyan government's flagship climate resilience project, funding grassroots initiatives across the country.

Tackling disease in Ethiopia

This project showed how climate triggers for rapid response can improve health crisis management – learnings now being applied in other areas and projects.



'Changing the indicator from hospital admissions to weather thresholds meant we could act before outbreaks hit.'

Netsanet Feleke, Christian Aid Ethiopia Project Officer

Project summary: This project ran from 2021 to 2023 with Action For Development, trialling ways to improve the public health response to climate-sensitive diseases, including malaria. It involved close cooperation with government meteorological and health services, and directly reached over 147,000 people.

Local legacy: 87% of health facilities in the project area have an emergency management system in place, with updated outbreak preparation and response plans. The rapid response teams and processes established by the project remain operational, activated by climate triggers rather than spikes in cases, to enable earlier response.

Wider impacts: Since the project ended, the government has expanded the use of rapid response teams, drawing on the project's operating procedures to guide them. With malaria risks expanding to new areas, they have now also pre-positioned medical supplies in the new risk zones, ready to treat outbreaks. Within Christian Aid, learnings around the use of forecasts and trigger thresholds to anticipate and prepare for crises have fed into major new programmes based around 'anticipatory action', including those aiming to prevent conflict.

Observation stations in Nicaragua

This project empowered communities to generate climate data as well as use it, and the network of observation stations continues to grow.



'CLIMA normalised forecast-based farming; families now plan around the weather rather than hope for it.'

Fatima Ismael, CEO of Soppexcca

Project summary: The CLIMA project trialled volunteer-run climate observation stations and training to support farming families to translate forecasts into practical plans. The project, with Soppexcca and Centro Humboldt (later with CafeNica), ran from 2020 to 2023.

Local legacy: Forecast-based farming has become the norm in the project areas, increasing and improving harvests. The network of community-managed climate stations continues to expand, connected to national and regional networks. Feeding data into the CafeNica app, these now routinely guide farmers' decisions around planting, pruning, pest control and harvesting, and generate early warning alerts that help farmers to minimise losses, especially during hurricane season. In 2023 Soppexcca won Nicaragua's top coffee quality prize, highlighting the link between forecast-based farming and cup quality.

Wider impacts: Coffee cooperatives are expanding the network into neighbouring Honduras. Within Christian Aid, the approach of creating climate observation posts to gather and share highly localised information has already influenced other resilience work, including a major programme in the DRC, Myanmar, South Sudan and Colombia.

Gender equality

From heavy domestic workloads to limited schooling, girls and women face multiple constraints that restrict their opportunities. All ITL projects work to empower women and girls, while some focus explicitly on transforming the attitudes and behaviours that hold them back, from early marriage to gender-based violence. These projects often harness the power of faith leaders to drive social change.

Empowering girls in Nigeria

This project equipped faith leaders to drive change in their communities and to influence legislation outlawing child marriage.



Project summary: CAAGI – the Collective Action for Adolescent Girls Initiative – worked with faith leaders and adolescent girls to reduce early marriage, support girls to stay in school and build their skills for earning. Working through our partners DPI, GAT, the Christian Association of Nigeria and Jama’atu Nasril Islam, the project ran from 2016 to 2018, in areas where early marriage is common.

Local legacy: Changing entrenched attitudes takes time and patience, but drawing on the faith leaders’ toolkit that the project created, Christian and Muslim faith leaders continue to actively champion girls’ rights, including stepping in to prevent forced early marriage. With growing public advocacy from pastors and imams for girls to complete their schooling and reach at least 18 before they marry, there is clear evidence of long-term change in project areas, with more girls in school and fewer child street traders (hawkers). Increased community action against rape and child abuse also reflects a sustained shift in the way girls are perceived and valued.

The girls who took part in the project, now young women, continue to use the skills they learned, from soapmaking to sewing, to provide for themselves and their families.

Wider impacts: The project model, tools and resources have enabled replication in other districts and influenced other programmes. The faith leaders’ toolkit was presented at the UN’s Commission on the Status of Women, and public input from faith leaders and girls themselves helped ensure that the Child Rights Act was passed in Kaduna State – a significant legal step prohibiting child marriage. The Faith Actors’ Dialogue Forum continues to mobilise faith leaders on gender issues.

‘There is a huge increase in the number of children who are in school, and the majority are girls, and this has drastically reduced the number of children hawking... Today, there is no culture of silence in our community, as in the past, on issues of rape.’

Imam Mohammed Sani, Sabon Gaya

Empowering entrepreneurs in the Middle East

This early project equipped women in fragile and restricted contexts with the skills to earn, informing future work with conflict-affected communities.



Project summary: This project supported Palestinian women to develop the skills for entrepreneurship, in contexts where legal, practical and cultural barriers put formal jobs beyond their reach. The project, delivered by the YWCA in the occupied Palestinian territory (the West Bank), and by Association Najdeh in Lebanon, reached almost 3,000 women from 2012 to 2014. By the end of the project, 40 to 65% of participants in the different locations had found work – compared to women’s general labour force participation rate of 17 to 25% at the time.

Local legacy: The project empowered women to find ways to earn that were not dependent on work permits or transport, aiming to equip them for income generation even in confined and volatile contexts. We are hopeful that these skills continued to benefit participants for many years, but although we still work with both partners in the project areas, we have no long-term update. Renewed conflict in the Middle East meant that follow-up was not feasible in the timeframe for this report, as partners had to pivot to urgent humanitarian work.

Wider impacts: The project’s work empowering refugee women in Lebanon became the blueprint for Christian Aid’s ongoing work with refugees in this region, informing later projects with both Palestinian and Syrian refugees. In the occupied Palestinian territory, the project enabled our partner YWCA to secure an EU grant of €1.5 million to further this work.

Seven years on



‘Since I started sewing, I have never been out of a job.’

25-year-old Fatima has used her profits from tailoring to set up two of her younger sisters in perfumery and sewing businesses.



‘During holidays, I mass produce bedsheets and pillowcases, and sell them in school.’

20-year-old Zainab is studying medical lab sciences at university, selling home furnishings to cover costs.



‘Honestly, I am so grateful and am happy with all the progress I am making.’

Martha, 26, diversified from shopkeeping into farming. Her profits have enabled her to buy a larger plot of land and livestock.

Mobile money in Sierra Leone

This mobile money project transformed rural women's access to finance, leading a private sector provider to extend the approach across the country.



'Orange Money now interacts directly with the groups. As agents, they earn commission on transactions and serve the wider community. Federating the groups with a district coordinator kept the energy and agency alive after the grant.'

Mattia Dimoh, Christian Aid Country Director, Sierra Leone

Project summary: This project brought mobile digital banking services to remote areas of Sierra Leone for the first time. Running from 2022 to 2024, the project worked with SEND, RAADA and Orange Money to connect grassroots savings groups in 40 villages with the technology and training to upgrade and scale their services. By the end of the project, 97% of the women taking part had independent access to their own money, rather than being wholly dependent on male relatives.

Local legacy: The systems and structures that the project established now function fully independently. The groups are still active as mobile money agents, working directly with Orange Money and earning commission on the services they provide locally. Now that rural women are connected to formal banking services, including low interest loans, a major barrier to enterprise has been removed. Everyday financial transactions have become more straightforward, enabling women to invest in and grow their businesses, from farming to tailoring to milling rice.

By cutting journeys to distant bank branches and simplifying transactions, the project transformed rural women's access to finance, enabling and encouraging entrepreneurship.

With higher incomes and visibility, women's influence and status have also increased, with more women involved in household decision making and in community leadership positions.

Wider impacts: The project clearly demonstrated the commercial viability of private sector providers working directly with grassroots community groups to bring financial services to remote rural areas. As a direct result of this pilot, Orange Money has adopted this model to reach other rural communities across Sierra Leone. Within Christian Aid, the project generated valuable insights around new approaches for private sector partnerships.

Family planning in Burundi

This project led more couples to openly discuss and practise family planning, prompting follow-up projects with larger donors.



'We got a breakthrough to the religious leaders, especially Anglicans and Evangelicals. They were trained and able to talk freely to their congregations, encouraging them to take family planning matters seriously.'

Philip Mato Galgalo, Christian Aid Country Director, Burundi

Project summary: With our partners PEAB, RCBIF, WOI and BUNERELA+, the project worked through Christian and Muslim faith leaders to shift attitudes around family planning, in a context of large, closely-spaced families with high poverty and maternal mortality. When the project began in 2016, 81% of women who needed family planning support were not getting it. By the project end the following year, this had dropped sharply to just 18%.

Local legacy: With consistent and aligned messages from faith leaders and health centres, project areas have seen a lasting change in social norms and behaviour. Couples now talk more openly about family planning, including birth spacing and contraception, and together engage more with health services for family planning support.

Wider impacts: The pilot led to two follow-up projects, funded by institutional donors, which extended the project approach, and insights were shared at sector events at national and international level. The family planning policy developed by the project still guides Christian Aid's work in this area.

Tackling violence in Zimbabwe

This project established thriving structures and networks that continue to drive change at both local and national levels.



'If Padare had not been funded to reach out to our remote society, we could still be abusing women with impunity.'

Clement Gudza, village head, Buhera District

Project summary: This project, with the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and Padare, worked with faith leaders and previous perpetrators to reduce gender-based violence. Running from 2017 to 2020, it combined theological and technical approaches with men's outreach in prisons and communities, and the percentage of people who thought that wife-beating was acceptable fell from over a third to 12%, in project areas.

Local legacy: We have no current figures for attitudes towards gender-based violence in the project areas, but the community structures, resources and networks established by the project have all endured – suggesting lasting and ongoing changes in both beliefs and behaviours.

Wider impacts: The project supported the creation of top-level gender policies within Zimbabwe's churches, and the Gender and Faith Network founded by the project now has over 50 member organisations, acting as a national platform for advocacy, campaigning and action. This has included feeding into national policy debates and influencing the 2022 Marriages Act, which outlawed child marriage for both girls and boys. The positive masculinities framework developed early in this project fed into ITL's CAAGI project in Nigeria.

Inclusive markets

Many ITL projects have focused on empowering producers to add value to their raw produce, reach customers and secure higher prices. These have supported producers to build the skills and structures for profitable and resilient enterprises, while also addressing the barriers they face. Key learnings from earlier pilots helped us refine our approach.



28 partners delivered these projects, often working together on sector-wide issues. Current projects focus on bamboo in Malawi, silk and saffron in Afghanistan and milk in Zimbabwe. These only moved to the delivery phase after extensive preparatory research and analysis.



Wild cocoa

Bolivia*, 2009–2014

Securing a minimum price for wild Amazonian cocoa tripled its value for indigenous producers. Learnings laid the groundwork for all future markets work, highlighting the need for detailed market analysis, and for intensive support to help poor producers – especially those with limited schooling – to develop business skills.



Solar lamps

India, 2011–2013

The project supported community groups to sell solar lanterns via loan-purchase, reaching buyers in over 100 villages. These solar lanterns brought light for families to study and work, and dramatically cut fuel costs, but demand was lower than expected. Critical learnings around the depth of market analysis fed directly into later projects.



Hibiscus

Nicaragua, 2011–2015

The cooperative became a profitable independent business with 13 product lines, reaching markets in Europe and the US. Despite disruption, their production line kept running during the pandemic, protecting jobs and supplier relationships. They continue to supply Walmart, a relationship brokered during the project.



Cookstoves

Nigeria, Malawi, Ethiopia and Mali

From 2014 to 2016, potters and other women's groups developed supply chains for cleaner cookstoves, often cutting family firewood use by half. Many groups have since become independent enterprises, and the project fed into a major EU-funded programme on women's entrepreneurship in the sustainable energy sector.



Cocoa

Nicaragua, 2014–2019

Drawing on learnings from Bolivia, the project supported coffee farmers to diversify into cocoa, introducing new plant varieties and processing capabilities, and forging market links. The chocolate factory is still active and Soppexcca's artisanal chocolate, rebranded as Rustikao in 2020, has since won flavour and enterprise awards.



Coffee

Burundi, 2014–2019

Farmers increased harvests fourfold, and improved access to finance and markets. Cooperatives remain active and profitable, and relationships forged with buyers in Europe, Japan and the US have endured. Business success has leveraged investment in milling equipment, and a World Bank-funded programme adopted the ITL approach.



Vegetables

India, 2012–2016

Dalit farmers increased incomes by 40%, bypassing middlemen to reach business customers directly. The farmer groups still sell organic vegetables, but did not register as an independent company. The project's key legacy was in embedding proactive action on caste discrimination into Christian Aid's wider work in India.



Milk

Haiti, 2013–2014

The market map and government-approved national action plan significantly strengthened sector-wide coordination and logistics. The current conflict has caused disruption, but the Let Agogo dairy farmers' network continues to operate nationally, supplying supermarkets, hotels, schools and humanitarian food projects.



Shrimp

El Salvador, 2013–2018

ITL's regional Central American project supported a new shrimp cooperative to reach formal markets, including restaurants and hotel chains. The pandemic saw a dramatic loss in jobs and income as tourism collapsed, but the cooperative survived. As they have rebuilt, they have diversified into dried shrimp with a longer shelf life.



Honey

Kenya, 2014–2017

With greater access to training, equipment and markets, beekeepers more than doubled the price for their honey. Three of the four processing hubs established by the project remain active, together evolving into a farmer-run social enterprise. By 2025, Nyuki Hubs was processing and selling up to 40 tonnes of honey each year.



Rice

Ghana*, 2015–2017

Farmers increased yields by 60%, formed savings groups and secured higher prices for processed (parboiled) rice. Key learnings were around women being more open to new farming approaches than men. In 2020, the groups were still active and connected with government farming institutions.



Tea

Bangladesh, 2015–2019

Smallholders, mainly women, doubled their incomes once tea crops matured. The tea gardens and growers' associations established remain active and, impressed with tea's profitability, growers have expanded their plots. The uplift in income has led to new jobs, homes and businesses locally, and more children in school.

* To deepen our focus in fewer countries, we stopped working in Bolivia and Ghana in 2020.

EqualiTea in Bangladesh

This project sparked government recognition, investment and support for smallholder tea farmers, especially women.



Women tea growers can now access local government farming advice and support services. Previously, these were only available to men.

Project summary: The project, with Traidcraft Exchange, ran from 2015 to 2019, introducing a high-value, climate-resilient crop into new regions. It supported over 1,000 smallholder farmers with no prior tea experience – especially women – to plant and cultivate tea gardens on previously fallow land, and to form associations to collectively sell their tea. By 2019, family incomes had already almost doubled.

Local legacy: Tea is a long-term crop, providing income and employment for up to 100 years, and the original plots alone now generate at least £620 per year.

‘The project was not just a short-term livelihood intervention but a pathway to lasting poverty reduction, gender equity, and inclusive rural economic development in northern Bangladesh.’

Zahir Siddique, Head of Programmes and Operations in Bangladesh, Traidcraft Exchange

However, since the project ended, all the smallholders who started with just 33 decimals of land have expanded their tea gardens further. Families can increasingly afford school fees, land, livestock and technology, communities are attracting new businesses and workers, and women have increased their incomes and status.

The growers’ associations remain active as farmer-run legal entities who collectively manage members’ access to services, inputs and savings, and negotiate with traders and factories. One has now launched its own brand of packaged tea, creating a new, sustainable income stream.

Wider impacts: The project proved the feasibility and commercial viability of smallholder tea production, primarily by women, in non-traditional areas. This evidence influenced the Bangladesh Tea Board and other government institutions to recognise smallholders as key contributors to the national tea economy, and to start supporting them accordingly, with both subsidies and services. In a critical breakthrough for thousands of women across the sector, the local government began to offer farming advice and support services to women as well as men.

Coffee cooperatives in Burundi

This project transformed coffee farmers’ access to finance, and provided a successful template for larger donors to scale.



‘Linking farmers to reliable buyers, unlocking working capital and investing in farm-level productivity – those three levers together changed the game.’

Philip Mato Galgallo,
Christian Aid Country Director, Burundi

Project summary: This ambitious project, which ran from 2014 to 2019, saw five partners – COCOCA, CNAC, ABS, the University of Ngozi and TWIN – work with 18 cooperatives to increase yields, quality and prices, while also improving their access to finance and markets.

Local legacy: The cooperatives remain active and profitable. Several have used loans or profits to invest in more processing equipment, while their umbrella federation, COCOCA, secured investment for a roasting lab and dry mill, so they can now package and ship finished products. The 96 savings and loan groups set up by the project continue to provide farmers – including women – with working capital, and the demonstrable success of women producers, including their Horamama brand, has shifted local gender dynamics, with husbands allocating land to their wives for the first time.

Wider impacts: Enduring changes in finance policies – such as low interest loans for coffee producers – continue to benefit smallholders across the sector. The ITL project model was adopted and scaled up by larger donors, including for a £43million World Bank programme.

Honey hubs in Kenya

This project saw significant rises in beekeepers’ yields and prices, and local government support for honey.



Project summary: The project ran from 2014 to 2017, with The Hive, Nyuki Hubs and Kenya Honey Council. It established four hubs to support beekeepers with loan-purchase hives, equipment and training, and a collection and processing point for their raw honey. Beekeepers’ yields and honey prices doubled – or more.

Local legacy: The honey hubs evolved into a farmer-run social enterprise, Nyuki Hubs, which today processes and sells up to 40 tonnes of honey each year, from over 7,200 farmers. Nyuki Hubs is progressing towards full financial independence, but continues to receive some support from county governments.

‘With ITL’s funding, we transformed honey scavengers into honey farmers.’

Susan Wangai, Christian Aid Head of Programme Funding, Africa

Wider impact: The project saw local government investment in honey increase threefold, and the first government policies in a sector that was previously unregulated. With some hubs facing sustainability challenges – including one closure – the project generated extensive learning around the complexities of producer groups progressing from grant subsidy to full commercial independence. We have fed learnings around long-term business models directly into ITL’s current bamboo project in Malawi.

Peacebuilding and governance

ITL has trialled innovative ways to support communities living in violent contexts, and in fragile or post-war settings, to protect themselves and work towards lasting peace. This includes governance projects supporting citizens to have their say and claim their rights. This work often takes place in risky and volatile contexts, where setbacks are common and gains are hard won.

Shifting power in Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, ITL projects forged enduring community structures and networks that have widened participation in politics and decision making.

Sierra Leone's civil war raged for over a decade, until 2002. The abuse of power among elites and the marginalisation of the rural population were key contributing factors.

ITL has funded several projects in post-war Sierra Leone. The first, from 2009 to 2011, focused on reforming the traditional chieftaincy system in rural areas, and on giving women and young men more say in local decisions.



'Women's governance networks came out stronger – better coordinated, clearer leadership, more effective advocacy – and that organisational muscle has endured.'

Chinsia Pascho-George, Christian Aid Civil Society Project Manager

Village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) can become effective grassroots influence and support networks, as well as providing practical financial benefits for members.

Sustainable structures to influence spending

This project saw the creation of village development committees to counterbalance the power of the chiefs, conflict maps and dialogue sessions to address tensions, and training on tax and public spending. By the end of the project, three quarters of participants said they now had a say in local public spending decisions, up from just 28% at the project start.

The village development committees proved to be the project's most enduring legacy, operating with increasing confidence in subsequent years. Their push for investment in local healthcare services saw drops in both infant and maternal mortality in the project areas. Working with one of the same partners, NMJD, and a second partner, SEND, ITL then funded another governance project in neighbouring districts, this time with an explicit focus on increasing women's participation in politics.



Women's influence and networks

The Power to Women project, which ran from 2015 to 2018, saw three constituencies elect female MPs for the first time in 2018, and led to resident magistrates being posted to project areas to hear gender-based violence cases locally.

The leaders and networks that the project nurtured continue to speak out on key issues from gender-based violence to women's access to health services, normalising women's leadership and influence in public discourse. At a national level, this included championing the 2022 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Bill.

Alongside the project's political legacy, the village savings groups that the project nurtured not only boosted women's financial independence and community influence, they also evolved into effective grassroots peer support networks. ITL's subsequent mobile money project – see page 10 – sought to empower these networks further, recognising that political and economic empowerment go hand in hand.

Humanitarian spaces in Colombia

This project supported an innovative grassroots initiative to resist violence. 10 years on, Colombia's first urban 'humanitarian space' is still a safe haven.



'Today, the Puente Nayero humanitarian space is an example for the whole world... We're fighting for non-violence.'

Young musician from Puente Nayero, 2022

Project summary: In the violent port city of Buenaventura, our partners CIJP, Peace Brigades International and ABColombia supported two communities to establish the country's first urban 'humanitarian spaces', to protect residents from extreme violence from armed groups. There were no killings in these areas during the lifespan of the project, from 2015 to 2018.

Local legacy: A decade on, the humanitarian spaces have endured. Punta Icaco has seen some incursions, while Puente Nayero is more secure. It has remained largely free of violence, with little or no gang presence. In a volatile context, this achievement alone is testament to the community's strength and courage, and to the national and international support networks they have built – which have played a critical protective role. The community has established a memorial where the notorious 'chop house' once saw murder and mutilation, to remember the victims of violence.

Wider impacts: The project sought creative ways to engage, involve and protect younger residents. Today, many young people from the humanitarian spaces have grown up to be peace advocates, creating films and music to promote peace, and representing their communities in city-wide dialogue sessions.

Land rights in the Amazon

In the Bolivian and Brazilian Amazon, two ITL projects supported forest communities to secure the title deeds to their lands, and protect the forest from illegal loggers, miners and ranchers.



Project summary: Running from 2009 to 2014, our ITL launch project saw our partner CIPCA support two indigenous communities in Bolivia to gain the title deeds to their territory, an area of forest the size of Suffolk, and achieved a minimum legal price for wild Amazonian cocoa.

In Brazil our partner CPI empowered Quilombola communities to achieve several legal breakthroughs from 2011 to 2017, securing an area of forest larger than Ireland and gaining the legal right to harvest wild Brazil nuts – their main source of income. Bauxite mining rights on Quilombola territory were also suspended, and communities were exempted from paying the rural land tax.

Local legacy: We stopped working in both Bolivia and Brazil in 2020, to deepen our focus in fewer countries, and our exit reviews highlighted the legacy of this work. Legal breakthroughs around land ownership and forest protection have been critical to indigenous and Quilombola people's long-term security, and the

Our partner CPI supported Amazon communities in Brazil to build their advocacy skills and networks, helping equip them to claim and defend their rights to land and basic services.

organisations and networks that ITL helped strengthen have continued to play a crucial role in ongoing legal and advocacy campaigns. For example, in 2019, the Tsimane people finally saw their land recovered from illegal loggers and cattle ranchers, after seven years of negotiations.

Wider impacts: For people to thrive, they need to earn a decent living, but for remote forest communities, reaching markets is a major challenge. That's why both projects included livelihoods and markets elements alongside their struggles for land and legal rights. Each focused on products growing wild in the forest – cocoa and Brazil nuts, with significant learning between the two. In Bolivia, the project's ambitious plan for a chocolate factory proved unsuccessful, directly informing the decision in Brazil to focus on boosting business skills rather than on industrial processing capabilities.

Access to justice in Afghanistan

The project strengthened access to justice in rural areas. Despite the restricted context, especially for women, some local impacts have endured.



Project summary: The project built connections between the traditional councils that resolve disputes in most rural areas, and formal legal systems. Delivered through our partner CRDSA from 2017 to 2020, it also raised awareness of legal rights, and introduced recordkeeping processes and community human rights committees. Across more than 600 cases, participants' satisfaction rose from 60 to 95%.

Local legacy: The project aimed to benefit two groups: women and poor rural communities. The Taliban have since systematically stripped women of their legal rights, severely restricting their movement, education, employment and access to justice – and undoing the project's progress in this area. However, because the project worked with traditional community structures, closely involving Islamic scholars and elders, several impacts for rural communities have endured, including the new community committees. People better understand their basic rights and where to seek help, and collaboration and referrals between the informal and formal systems have become more routine.

Wider impacts: Learnings reflect the importance of blending with rather than bypassing established local systems, enabling a degree of sustainability even in volatile and restricted contexts.

'The skills people gained are still being used to manage community disputes.'

Yaqoob Rauf, Programme Manager, CAID Afghanistan

Community action in Myanmar

This project supported conflict-affected communities to lead local planning and response initiatives to improve health, nutrition and resilience.



Project summary: This project ran from 2021 to 2023 with our partners CHAD, Golden Pearl and Koe Koe Tech. It trialled ways to support people in remote conflict-affected areas to better meet their health, protection and nutrition needs, in the aftermath of Covid-19.

Local legacy: Security in the project areas has deteriorated, making communication difficult and inevitably undermining project impacts. However, the project was designed to empower communities to lead collective action in volatile contexts, and we have heard that many of the structures, systems and tools established to enable this have endured. Early warning systems remain active and trained community taskforces lead on preparation, from bomb shelters to emergency kits, and on safeguarding and crisis response. They continue to use the assessment tools they learned to identify vulnerabilities and set priorities.

The digital elements of the project were initially effective, helping communities share information when physical movement was impossible, but they did not endure: the chatbot and social media mechanisms were rendered obsolete by internet shutdowns.

Wider impacts: This project generated significant learning around the effectiveness of community taskforces and assessment tools, and around the relative strengths and risks of face-to-face and digital activities in fragile contexts. These learnings inform other Christian Aid work in Myanmar.

Collective philanthropy

Since its inception in 2009, **In Their Lifetime** has been enabled by a small group of dedicated supporters. By coming together to pool resources, they have enabled communities around the world to bring bold new ideas to life. As we look back on 16 years of impact, we'd like to thank everyone who has been part of the ITL journey.



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What makes ITL attractive for me as a supporter is the opportunity to fund innovative approaches to lifting people out of poverty. Whilst we understand that seed or pump-priming funding is inevitably time limited, the sustainability of a project beyond its initial funding support is clearly an important consideration... For me personally, the opportunity to visit communities participating in the WEEL [mobile money] project in Sierra Leone in 2023 has been a highly rewarding element of being part of the ITL supporters group.

Paul

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We were among the first supporters to sign up with ITL in the summer of 2009... We love the innovative nature of the projects supported, the interactive approach of the programme, the opportunities it has given us to meet and work with partners from across the world, and most of all the many friends we have made. Through our involvement with ITL we have learned so much about the potential for ethical, environmentally sensitive development in diverse communities. This has built our confidence in talking to friends, colleagues and congregations about all aspects of international development.

Lesley and Nigel



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Epworth is incredibly proud to work with our clients to support Christian Aid's 'In Their Lifetime' initiative. The projects deliver meaningful benefits for communities in crisis that last long after the funding ends... As an investment house that relies upon our Faith to help guide our investment decisions, it is tremendously rewarding to see the quality of individuals' lives that are being uplifted through Christian Aid's work. The long-term and growing impact of the ITL project is no better illustrated than by the work that has been undertaken with women in Afghanistan to help them cultivate saffron and rear silkworms – ensuring that their learning and resources are passed on within the broader community.

David Palmer, CEO, Epworth Investment Management

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I was delighted to be able to associate my giving with particular projects, and not just to put this into the 'General Fund' of a large organisation... One item that has pleased me is the willingness to use this funding to support unproven ideas that might not otherwise get funding, and to use the funding for pilot schemes that, if successful, can be used elsewhere.

Adrian

We'd like to dedicate this report to the memory of valued Christian Aid colleagues who worked on ITL projects and have since passed away, including Emery Ninganza in Burundi, and Solomon Woldetsadik and Tamrat Terefe in Ethiopia.

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