



This year's appeal is focussing on work in Burundi, one of the most densely populated and poorest countries in Africa. Heavily reliant on agriculture, it's also one of the least prepared to combat the effects of climate change, including droughts, floods and landslides. The global cost of living crisis has intensified the challenges: more than 70 per cent of the population live in poverty and more than half of children are chronically malnourished.

Christian Aid has been working in Burundi since 1995 when it first offered humanitarian assistance to people surviving the civil conflict. Now, alongside local partners, the organisation helps establish **Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs)**. These community-led groups mean people can save and borrow money, making small businesses possible, offering reliable and diverse incomes so families can eat regularly, get medicine when they need it, and build safer homes.



Caption: Aline Nibogora outside her house, with the bike she bought to help her grocery business.

Credit: Christian Aid/Armstrong Too.

Thirty-five-year-old Aline Nibogora is the chairperson of a VSLA which supports some 25 families in a remote village, in Makamba Province. Aline escaped an abusive marriage only to find herself on the streets begging for a place to stay.



Aline Nibogora transporting baked bricks from the brick kiln for her new house. Credit: Christian Aid/Armstrong Too.

Her life changed when she went to a three-day, Christian Aid-funded community workshop. With a small start-up loan, Aline began trading avocados and peanuts locally. She's now a grocery wholesaler and living on her own plot of land where she's building a home for her family. In the next five years she hopes to expand, so one day she can buy a mill. This will provide a source of income without the need to transport heavy goods over long distances.

