

This is Aline's Story

Christian Aid
Week 2024



Aline Nibogora is 35 and lives in Burundi. She was married young and when she was 14, she gave birth to the first of her six children. Her husband was violent and beat her regularly – one day it got so bad, she fled.

Forced to leave her children behind, Aline wandered the streets trying to stay close by, asking anyone for a place to sleep. “Those who showed me kindness would let me stay for two or three days, but it was difficult,” Aline explained. **“People would insult me and treat me with contempt. They forgot I was a human being. It filled me with sorrow.”**

In a patriarchal society where men dominate in almost every aspect, life is particularly challenging for women. They've been conditioned to be dependent on and dominated by men.

But Aline found the strength and determination to push back against the injustices she was facing. She went to a three-day community workshop where Christian Aid-funded trainers taught people about village savings and loans associations.

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"I came out of it with amazing knowledge and skills. During the training, I stayed focused and was determined to not miss out on anything at all. I really liked the teachers' methodology; **they restored in me a sense of hope and energy to take on initiatives.** From then on, I started working hard, so I would not be dependent on anyone."

With a small start-up loan, Aline began trading avocados and peanuts locally; then used her profits to buy a bicycle to transport greater quantities of goods to markets further afield.

Aline is now a grocery wholesaler; she's been reunited with three of her sons and lives on her own plot of land in a village in Kayogoro, in Makamba Province. She is planning to expand the business and is building a home for her family – in the hope she'll one day have all her children with her.



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"I bought some solar panels," Aline added. "We now have electricity and the children are able to see to do their homework in the evenings. It's true there's a shortage of food at the moment, so there's no lack of problems, but I'm doing what I can to get by, before we are able to harvest.

I enjoy spending time with my children, who are my favourite people in the world. We makes plans for the future and we pray together. This is important; **we are still alive thanks to God's grace. God comforts you through troubled times and gives you hope for a better future."**

Aline is also now the chairperson of her own village savings and loan association and has helped 25 other families: "I have been fortunate and it's important for me to be able to give back and train others who didn't have that opportunity for the further development of the community as well as our country."



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Aline says the support of Christian Aid has made the whole community feel comforted and empowered.

“We feel we are not alone in our initiatives. Without your support we could not go further, you empowered us by changing our living conditions. Before, we couldn't see opportunities around us. Now we can see positive and significant changes in our lives. We can be independent and live on our own thanks to your help through the training. I really thank you for that from the very bottom of my heart.”

Christian Aid supporters helped make this transformation for Aline and her neighbours – as well as millions of other people in the most vulnerable communities around the world. Last year, the organisation reached 3.3 million people through 275 programmes, from savings and loans associations to farming co-operatives, and climate disaster risk training to healthcare schemes.

Many of the projects Christian Aid funds are long-term and designed to combat poverty and help communities tackle issues like the climate crisis. Burundi, like many similar countries, is heavily reliant on agriculture - and is one of the least prepared to tackle climate emergencies, including droughts, floods and landslides.

Together, we can support families to secure a better future for themselves and future generations. With your help, we can work towards a world where families can escape the trap of poverty and fulfil their ambitions. Join us this Christian Aid Week.

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