Stories from our projects

Monira’s Story

Monira lives in Bangladesh - home to 160 million people, and among the countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

“All my life I grew up seeing six seasons in my country. But now the hot season is so long, it’s burning all the time. Winter comes for a very short time and too late, so we cannot grow vegetables like before. There are many frequent cyclones. The monsoon season begins when it is time to harvest. Due to the sudden rains our crops get ruined! During the last cyclone, our trees fell to the ground and our houses collapsed. All the crops on the land have been destroyed in the cyclone. We are already very poor, and this climate change is making our days miserable.”

Support Traidcraft Exchange and donate to the Regenerators appeal between 8th March and 7th June 2021 and the UK government will double your gift to help the most vulnerable stand strong in the face of climate change. www.traidcraftexchange.org/regenerators

But Morina and others like her are working with Traidcraft Exchange to fight back. They are the Regenerators – people on the frontline of the climate crisis who are taking action to protect their land and livelihoods. They know what they need to do – they just need support to get started.

With your help, they can come together to fight back against climate change – by planting trees, reducing plastic use, and switching to alternative fuels and climate resilient crops. Alongside this, they can come together to find new ways to earn a decent living, and save collectively – meaning that when disaster strikes, communities are better prepared.

“We learn and understand something new from this project in every meeting. This project is changing our lives and making us aware about climate change. We are trying to plant trees. We are trying to build our houses stronger and on a higher place. We no longer want to be dependent on agricultural work only. We are trying to learn different skills of income. Together when we stand side by side, we are able to deal with many problems. We can help each other with wisdom; we can deal with any danger together.”
Mwanaidi’s Story

Mwanaidi is bold, resilient and innovative, but with increasingly long seasons of drought threatening her crops, it’s getting harder for her to make even a basic living. She lives in a coastal region of rural Tanzania, and every day, she faces the reality of climate change.

"This year the floods have caused the cashew trees to die, our maize and rice swept away by water and at the end of the rains we don’t have anything to eat. These changes, especially floods, have caused our incomes to go down.

This is the fourth year I am witnessing these floods on the valley and our food swept away.

I would like to have a garden where I can plant vegetables like tomatoes and then sell them to people and earn money; or planting watermelons and then sell afterwards. But if I harvest rice and get a lot of money, I want to build a good house so that my children can have a good life."

Mwanaidi and her community are on the frontline of the climate crisis, but with your help, and donations doubled by the UK government, she and her community can fight back and regenerate the land they depend on - by planting crops that can grow in extreme weather, protecting the forests and investing in climate-smart technology.
From greenhouses, to solar panels and new irrigation techniques, Mwanaidi and her community already know that there are solutions to the problems they face - they just need your support to get started.

“I think irrigation could work - especially during those times when there is no rain. We could use water from the river, put some water pipes and irrigate our farms, that way there will be a certainty that we will be able to harvest. So, I believe irrigation will make our life better compared to now - if there were droughts in the future and we had the irrigation pipes; I would be able continue to farm and harvest without any problem.”

By learning new skills and changing how they farm, the Regenerators can increase their profits and turn their work into businesses - drastically increasing their incomes.

With basic climate friendly technology, and knowledge and skills about how to adapt to erratic weather patterns through things like growing new crops, investing in beehives or fisheries, communities will be able to earn more from the hard work they already do. These changes mean that whatever the climate crisis throws at them, they’ll be able to feed their families and earn a decent income.

Not only this, but by switching to green technology and planting trees, they can regenerate their land - and protect the earth for generations to come.
Issa’s Story

In Issa’s village they don’t ask ‘is climate change real?’. They ask ‘how will I feed my family now that the floods have destroyed my farm?’

As he explains, it wasn’t always like this. “In my time when I was growing up, these changes had not happened. Back then the seasons went through without any problem. People here knew exactly what to do because the weather was stable.”

But the certainty of his childhood is long gone. Climate change means that the coastal region’s once predictable weather is now erratic, and harvests have suffered. A cycle of floods and droughts mean farming in his community barely turns a profit.

“The last rainy season, there was a lot of water and the river flooded. Some of the villagers lost their animals and their houses were destroyed - we had to find a boat to rescue them.”

But Issa is part of the Regenerators project – a groups of people in some of the world’s most vulnerable communities who have plans to tackle the climate crisis face on and help build a better, greener world where everyone, no matter where they were born, can earn a decent living from their hard work.

By investing in climate smart technology, like solar panels and irrigation systems, alongside planting trees to restore soils and biodiversity, and growing new, resilient crops, those on the frontline of the climate crisis like Issa can protect their homes and incomes.

“For my kids, when they reach an age when they can understand, I will advise them to be able to use things like irrigation and solar. This could be their rescue as in this place we all depend on agriculture, so if they do this it will bring them more income and development.” Issa.
Protecting forests and planting new trees will regenerate soils and stop erosion, mitigating the worst impacts of flooding. Growing new varieties of crops, better suited to surviving erratic weather, will help communities to earn a decent income and grow enough to eat and sell whatever the climate throws at them.
Laily’s Story

Meet Laily. She’s lived in Rajibpur, Bangladesh all her life. Growing up, life was dictated by the seasons and rice harvests. The rains fell regularly, and the short dry season allowed the land to rest. But climate change means the region’s once predictable weather is now erratic, and harvests have suffered. Increasing floods have swept away her crops and she has lost her house four times to devastating flooding. Unpredictable rains, a longer dry season and the destruction of forest mean farming in her community barely turns a profit. She worries that things are changing more rapidly.

She told us “I have never seen so many floods in my life. This time the floods lasted for the longest time of all the floods we’ve had in the last 20 years and all our crops were submerged. There has been excessive rainfall this year causing the floods to last for a longer time. There had never been so many droughts before either as well as so much rain. It is so hot and sunny that we can’t even go out of the house or stay longer outside. When it is supposed to rain it is not raining, but when it is not supposed to rain, it is raining excessively. This time due to an untimely and long flood, we could not bring any crop to the house from the field. All the crops were ruined. Paddy, rice, all kinds of pulses and vegetables were all submerged. Every year, the winter temperatures are changing extremely at an unprecedented rate. It is very cold in the winter and very hot in summer.”

But Laily isn’t helpless in the face of the climate crisis. She has a plan - to work with her community and take action to combat the impact of climate change. In fact, they have already begun to take small but vital steps All they need is a helping hand to get started – though training in conservation skills, irrigation and anti flooding techniques, and the support to come together in groups which can demand change and take collective action.

Work with Laily’s community has already begun - but with your support, together, we can do so much more to fight back against climate change.

“Since we live with floods, we, the people of the community, have taken various steps to prevent floods. After learning about tree plantation from this project, we are planting trees on both sides of the road so that the roads do not break up. In the dry season we, the farmers, are using generators for irrigation as it is so different than the rainy season. Many people again draw water through electric lines and cultivate different types of crops, especially paddy. In this way we try to mitigate the harmful effects of climate change.”

Laily is bold, resilient and innovative. She is on the frontline of the climate crisis, and with your help, she and her community can fight back against the devastating impact of climate change, and regenerate the land they depend on for the generations to come. Now is the time to act.
“I think that in the next 20 years, the country’s climate change will become more severe and extreme. We are really worried about the future of our children because as it is now, they will never be able to live here. The new generation needs to be much more aware of the climate situation that we were not. We did not know about it. Our children need to take action and they need to be motivated to plant trees.”