

2025

**ANNUAL REPORT**

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## See what's growing next!

Subscribe to our newsletter for more farmer voices, field updates, and the latest stories of irrigation in action.



*During an April field visit to the Entete community in Mozambique's Ilha District, producers gathered to share their experiences using irrigation pumps through ADRA's Wiliphihera Project. The visit was marked by visible pride and enthusiasm, as the same group of farmers was later selected to present their testimonies at a partner forum—sharing firsthand how irrigation is shaping their farming season.*

# Note from leadership

Dear friends and partners,

The past year brought significant changes to the global development landscape. Sharp reductions in international aid, driven by major cuts to USAID and other multi/bilateral donors, have made it harder for development organizations to operate and for millions of smallholder farmers across sub-Saharan Africa to access critical support. For KickStart, this moment called for decisive action.

Partnerships with nonprofit organizations funded by bilateral donors have played a major role in helping KickStart reach farmers with training and irrigation pumps. But with major sector-wide aid cuts, multiple partners lost large portions of their funding, significantly scaled back, or closed their programs and can no longer help us with these critical functions. So, we are pivoting our operations to a more direct-to-farmer model. We are expanding our direct sales through local retail outlets, and strengthening partnerships with microfinance institutions, farmer cooperatives, agribusinesses, and irrigation agents who can help farmers afford and access our pumps.

Despite the past year's challenges, early signals from our pivot are encouraging. KickStart has worked with microfinance institutions to create practical ways for smallholder farmers to finance pumps and lower the risk of lending. We are working with cooperatives and agribusinesses to bring pumps into their networks and recruiting irrigation agents to rent pumps to farmers who cannot yet afford to buy. This year, we also expanded our footprint in Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Sudan, and Uganda, strengthening partnerships and our on-the-ground presence.

Our impact remains steady over last year, a positive sign that our approach is working even as the aid landscape continues to shift. In FY 2025, more than 21,000 of our pumps were put in the hands of smallholder farmers, enabling over 80,000 more women, men, and children to take a major step out of poverty, generating \$11 million in new annual profits and wages, and providing 800,000 people with fresh produce. When families earn predictable, year-round incomes and have access to nutritious food, their lives and the lives of their children and their communities are transformed forever. Children stay in school, child stunting is reduced, and physical and mental health are improved.

The need for, and the potential of, irrigation in sub-Saharan Africa is immense. Almost one-third of children under 5 are stunted, and a similar number never graduate from primary school. Some 15 million young men and women are entering the labor force each year with few opportunities for employment. KickStart has sold more than 425,000 pumps to date, yet with plentiful renewable surface and groundwater and less than 5% of African farmland irrigated (compared to over 40% in Asia), millions more farmers can begin irrigating, secure year-round incomes, and lift themselves out of poverty. Luckily, new actors are entering the irrigation space. However, most of the newly offered solutions are far beyond the means of average smallholders, while our MoneyMaker pumps remain among the most affordable solutions for millions of farmers.

Our mission remains the same: advancing irrigation to enable millions of smallholder farmers to increase their incomes, provide nutrition to their children, afford healthcare and school fees, expand their farms and businesses, and invest in their futures. And the benefits extend well beyond individual farmers: pumps are shared with neighbors; farm workers earn wages; traders buy and resell the produce; and communities access year-round nutritious food. With irrigation, farmers can adapt more easily to the increasingly unreliable weather, saving crops when rain fails and replanting quickly after floods.

As you move through this report, you will see how KickStart is adapting to a changing world while staying grounded in what works. With your continued partnership, we will reach millions more farming families and support them in building secure, productive futures.

With gratitude,  
Peter & Martin



**Peter Juma**  
President & COO

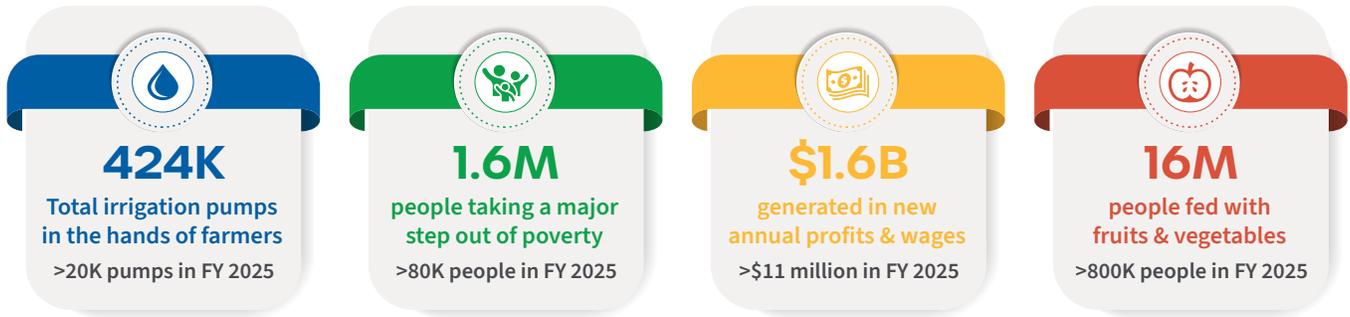


**Martin Fisher**  
Co-founder & CEO



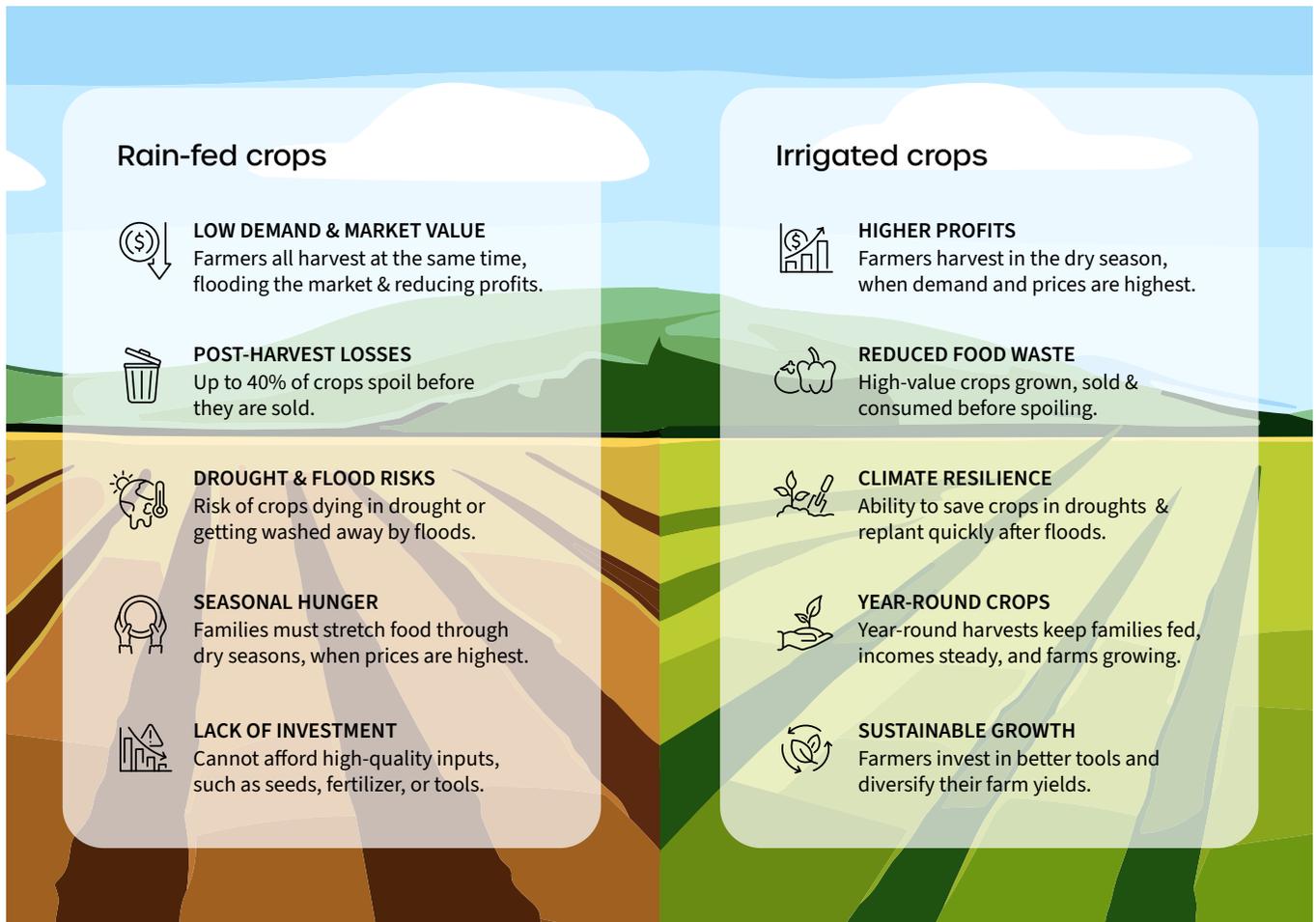
# Driving impact

Our impact data indicates that more than 75% of farmers using our pumps take a major step out of poverty, creating the financial stability needed to nourish their families, support their children's education, access healthcare, and invest in long-term goals. The infographic below presents our total impact to date as well as key outcomes from FY 2025.



## KickStart's theory of change

Irrigation is a pathway to growth & resilience



# How KickStart is pivoting

As aid-backed partnerships contract, KickStart is scaling new, market-driven ways for smallholder farmers to access irrigation affordably and locally. This pivot strengthens retail channels, expands financing options, and deepens commercial agricultural partnerships, ensuring farmers can continue to invest in irrigation through sustainable systems.

## 1. Expanding access

KickStart is strengthening its direct-to-consumer retail networks so farmers can buy pumps, spare parts, and access training closer to home. By working with these local agro-dealers, we are making irrigation pumps easier to find and easier to purchase within local communities.

In 2025, for example, KickStart recruited its first 16 rural retail outlets across underserved areas of Rwanda. These outlets now serve as consistent local access points where farmers can see, test out, and purchase pumps on demand, as well as receive practical guidance on how to use them.

To spread the word about these new access points, KickStart is expanding outreach through radio, field demos, social media, and other digital campaigns. Collectively, these efforts are helping build stronger, farmer-led commercial markets throughout the region.



Above: KickStart staff and the Agri-vet Peace Counter team in Ngororero District, Rwanda. The shop now stocks MoneyMaker pumps and parts.

Below: Eunice Ngeno of Bomet County, Kenya, a KickStart R2T&B irrigation agent, raises awareness about pump rentals.

## 2. Increasing affordability

Affordability remains a major barrier to irrigation for many farmers. In response, KickStart is rolling out several innovative pilots to address this core barrier with flexible financing models. This includes the Rent-to-Try-and-Buy (R2T&B) model.

Through the R2T&B program, trained irrigation agents rent pumps to farmers at affordable daily rates. On average, each agent reaches five farmers, extending affordable irrigation access to farming households across their communities. By renting a pump, the farmers can learn how to irrigate their crops, earn income, and build confidence before purchasing a pump of their own. This approach reduces upfront risk while creating clear pathways to ownership.

This year, KickStart continued to expand R2T&B in Kenya by recruiting 36 additional irrigation agents across Bomet, Kisumu, and Homa Bay counties. These agents are young, entrepreneurial, and deeply rooted in their communities, often with a diploma in agriculture and strong ties to nearby cooperatives and farmer networks.





*Mabouba Diagne, Senegal's Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty, and Livestock, celebrates the Senegal launch with KickStart President Peter Juma.*

### 3. New markets and partnerships

KickStart is expanding both the partnerships we work through and the markets we serve to accelerate irrigation adoption at scale. This includes working more closely with commercial partners in high-priority agricultural sectors, as well as expanding through national governments prioritize irrigation.

#### Commercial markets

In export-oriented sectors such as coffee and cocoa, irrigation is increasingly important as farmers face erratic rainfall and other weather changes.

The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that coffee could lose up to half of its best growing land by 2100 as weather patterns shift, and the World Bank notes that recent extremes have already contributed to sharp price swings in coffee and cocoa, affecting both farmers and the markets they serve.

For small-scale coffee farmers, irrigation helps manage dry periods, increase yields, extend harvest cycles, replant aging trees, and improve crop quality—supporting higher returns and more predictable

incomes. Consistent production also benefits coffee buyers and processors by improving supply reliability and reducing risk to make it easier for lenders—like local savings cooperatives and microfinance institutions—to extend credit to farmers with confidence.

Irrigation is proving similarly beneficial for the cocoa industry in Nigeria, where KickStart is integrating irrigation into the way cocoa is grown and sold under the USDA-funded TRACE Project. Trainings and tailored financing help farmers reduce risks to their harvests, improve cocoa quality, and increase the value of their crops.

#### Government partners

KickStart is expanding its impact by partnering with national and local governments to enter new markets. In 2025, we officially launched operations in Senegal in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and agribusiness distributor Nafiyo Solutions.

KickStart also expanded its presence in South Sudan, where demand for affordable irrigation remains high. In both countries, strong local partnerships support farmer access, training, and long-term market development.



## A new generation of farmers

### Linda's diversified agribusiness

In Nyamasaria, Kisumu County, Kenya, Linda Achieng's story shows how irrigation can support youth-led enterprise and local food markets.

Recruited in 2025 into one of KickStart's first Rent to Try and Buy irrigation agent cohorts, Linda holds a diploma in agriculture and runs multiple businesses, including renting irrigation pumps, seedling propagation, vertical and cone garden setup, and pig farming. After completing KickStart's agent training—focused on bookkeeping, customer outreach, and profitable irrigated production—she expanded her pump portfolio to three pumps, which she now rents to farmers in her network.

Linda began by establishing a vegetable and tree nursery, using a MoneyMaker pump to ensure consistent quality and supply. Income from seedling sales and pump rentals allowed her to reinvest

quickly, hire staff, and grow demand for her seedlings in Kisumu and nearby counties.

Motivated to expand further, Linda joined forces with two other young people to lease land and farm vegetables together. Within months, the group began producing kale, tomatoes, and chili peppers for Kisumu markets.

On less than one acre, they now harvest seven bags of kale each week, each weighing up to 100 kilograms. Sold locally, this generates between \$160 and \$230 per week from kale alone, with additional income from other crops.

As demand grows, the group is now expanding to five acres. Today, Linda's work creates jobs, supports multiple income streams, and demonstrates how access to irrigation can unlock opportunity through enterprise and community collaboration.

*Linda, left, shows the progress of her seedlings, alongside her daughter.*

# Steady growth in South Sudan

## Moses' journey to farming income

In South Sudan, where conflict, displacement, and extreme weather make farming difficult, Moses Modi Paul's experience shows how simple irrigation can bring greater consistency to farming, even in the most fragile of contexts. A smallholder vegetable farmer and father of eight in Kajo Keji, Moses supports his family through agriculture, working with limited resources.

Before he began using a MoneyMaker pump, Moses depended on rain-fed farming and watering cans — heavy and slow — which limited how much he could grow and when. His harvests brought in around \$300 a season, often not enough to cover school fees, food, and medical expenses for a large household. During dry spells, production would slow or stop. He briefly tried a generator-powered pump, but fuel and maintenance costs quickly made it unsustainable.

Then Moses attended a local irrigation demonstration and learned about the MoneyMaker Max. The fuel-free

design immediately stood out. Tasks that had once taken up to eight hours a day could now be done in about two, freeing time and energy to expand his farm and plant more frequently.

Moses purchased the pump through an installment plan from a local agro-dealer, Tuldax General Trading, and received training on how to use and maintain it. With reliable irrigation, he began farming year-round and doubled his production. His earnings rose to an average of \$650 per harvest, with vegetables sold in nearby markets, restaurants, and a local hospital. Buyers now depend on his produce even outside the rainy season.

Today, farming is Moses' primary source of income. More consistent harvests have eased financial pressure at home and given the family room to plan ahead, including saving toward a motorized tricycle to transport produce. He also shares what he has learned with neighbors, encouraging other farmers to consider irrigation as a practical way to strengthen their farms and livelihoods.



*Moses irrigates his vegetable plot, where reliable irrigation now allows him to grow and sell produce beyond the rainy season.*

# Financials & NGO ratings

## Financial summaries 2025

### Operating revenue

Product sales	542,971*
Foundations and trusts	1,991,022
Individuals	3,164,965
Corporations	308,911
Governments	11,669
Donated legal services	136,523
Investment & other non-operating activity	136,579
<b>Total operating revenue</b>	<b>6,292,640</b>

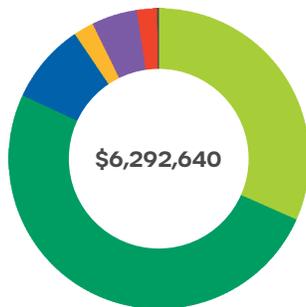
### Operating expenditures

Program & other services	4,955,123**
Donated legal services	136,523
Management & general	453,681
Fundraising	100,531
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>5,645,858</b>

\* Gross margins = \$92

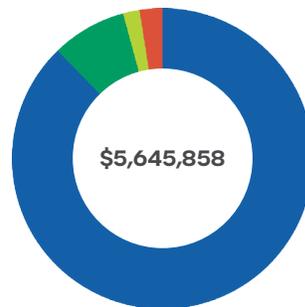
\*\* Includes cost of goods = \$451

### Revenue



- 50% Individuals
- 32% Foundations
- 9% Product sales (earned income)
- 5% Corporations
- 2% Investments & other income
- 2% Donated services
- >1% Governments

### Expenses



- 88% Program & other services
- 8% Management & general
- 2% Fundraising
- 2% Donated services



# Growing food, protecting nature

## How irrigation links livelihoods and conservation

KickStart's partnership with Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO) in Zambia shows how irrigation can support both farmer livelihoods and environmental ecosystems.

In areas where pressure on wildlife and water sources is high, COMACO's collaboration with KickStart helps families transition from poaching to sustainable, irrigated farming businesses that offer more stable sources of income.

Research published in *Frontiers in Conservation Science* finds that community-based conservation efforts are more effective when households have

access to viable alternative livelihoods, reducing reliance on wildlife hunting.

At the heart of this work is a simple idea: conservation works best when it aligns with economic opportunity. Through COMACO's unique model, former hunters receive training, supplies, access to dependable markets, and KickStart irrigation pumps, making dry season farming possible. With steady harvests and guaranteed buyers, conservation becomes a practical way to earn a living rather than a competing priority.

Together, KickStart and COMACO demonstrate that conservation and income growth can move forward side by side. Farming becomes a stable path forward, supporting household income, conservation goals, and a brighter future.



COMACO graduates in Zambia turn in their rifles for KickStart pumps and farming supplies, shifting from hunting to conservation-aligned agriculture.

# Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following FY 2025 key supporters, whose partnership helps farmers across sub-Saharan Africa access the irrigation tools that make year-round harvests and stronger food systems possible.

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