

Create4Good Story Submission from the Stephen Lewis Foundation

(Fictionalized story compiled from reports from our community-led partners)

As the scorching sun beats down on Livingstone, Zambia, Ruth walks through the dusty streets towards her school. With each step, she feels the weight of climate change bearing down on her young shoulders. The once predictable weather patterns have become erratic.

Droughts have become more frequent, leaving crops parched, livelihoods threatened, and food security jeopardized. Droughts are often followed by periods of intense rainfall during the rainy season. The drought-hardened soil is less able to absorb the heavy rains, leading to surface runoff that floods in low-lying areas. The flooding causes damaged crops, eroded soil, the leaching of soil nutrients, and damaged roads and infrastructure.

In the classroom, Ruth struggles to concentrate in the stifling heat, and open windows only invite more dust and heat. Several of her classmates are absent, since many students must now stay home to help their families cope with the effects of drought and crop failure. Some students have moved to Lusaka to find work. Ruth's best friend, Mulenga, hasn't been at school for many days because she must spend hours every day fetching water for her family and their crops.

However, Ruth remains hopeful. She attends a program at her local library that teaches techniques to make crops more resistant to drought and flooding. Ruth is determined to apply what she has learned to protect her home and secure a brighter future for herself and generations to come.