



Mrs. Monica Mhadi, one of 15 wives of a Masai Chief, lost four of her seven children because of poor sanitary conditions. Luckily, such tragedies no longer occur.  
Photographer: Farhana Haque-Rahman, IFAD  
United Republic of Tanzania, October 2000

### MONICA HAS CLEAN WATER IN DODOMA, TANZANIA

As one of 15 wives of a Masai Chief, Monica Mhadi's life has always been better than other women in her village in rural Tanzania. Even so, she lost four of her seven children because of poor sanitary conditions. Luckily, such tragedies are no longer an inevitable part of Monica's world.

Access to clean water has made life safer for Monica and other Masai and Mangati women in Tanzania's Dodoma and Kondoa districts. A UN backed project has brought them safe drinking water, better sanitary conditions, and community health care. As a result, Monica's eighth baby was delivered under hygienic conditions with no complications.

The Water Supply and Health Project is funded by a UN agency, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the Belgian Survival Fund. IFAD finances food production programmes to alleviate rural poverty and improve nutritional standards in developing countries. Local communities take an active role in shaping these programmes.

With the Water Supply and Health Project in Tanzania, villagers formed water and healthcare committees to monitor the start-up fund and get government support for new bore wells. Monica and her husband helped plan the bore hole in their locality and contributed 100,000 shillings for its start-up.

Susana Masinga, who lives with her husband and two children in the nearby Chiboli village, also benefited from the Water Supply and Health Project. Before the new bore hole, fetching water used to be a full day's job that family members took turns doing. They could only wash their clothes once a month, and bathe once a week.

Now Susana can finish all her household chores — sweeping, cleaning, collecting firewood, making flour, cooking — and has time left over to run a small tea stall. In fact, she is talking about expanding her business to the market in the larger Fufu village.



Mrs. Hut Kondear received some fingerlings from the Community-Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP), an IFAD project in Cambodia.  
Photographer: Farhana Haque-Rahman, IFAD  
Cambodia, December 2001

### HUT KONDEAR IN KAMPOT, CAMBODIA, NOW HAS A FISH BUSINESS

Hut Kondear, age 22: "I wanted to raise fish to improve our family income because we didn't have enough money. First, my husband and I dug the pond and we received some food for that. Then we put water in it and set out to raise fish. We were assisted by the project for the initiative — raising of fish to increase income and other activities. I got in touch with the CBRD project to get some fingerlings. I received a contribution of 250 in September, and I paid myself for 250 more. So I put 500 fingerlings into the pond. They will become really big after six months but I can begin catching a few now. I'm hoping to eat some and sell some in the district market."

"The main other activities... I am growing vegetables and we have our rice field. We received some seeds for some different cabbages, some beans and some fruit trees. I also received training on how to grow the vegetables. As for us, we don't have many problems now. I am very happy with this fish pond."

First ravaged by the Indo-China War and then again by the Khmer Rouge, it is not surprising that Cambodia has the world's 22nd lowest GNP per capita or that, out of 174 countries, it ranks 137th in terms of the Human Development Index. War left over half a million landless and internally displaced people (IDPs), and even now Cambodians risk losing lives and limbs to the remaining four to six million land mines — about one for each rural Cambodian.

The presence of land mines is only one of many difficulties faced by people in rural areas. Just 30% of rural inhabitants have safe drinking water, 19% have adequate sanitation and 50% have access to health services. About four million survive below the poverty line, nearly 40% of the total Cambodian population.

While hard conditions such as these may seem the natural result of such a brutal past, they are not being accepted — not by IFAD and its partners, and certainly not by the women and men of Cambodia.

In six of Cambodia's most disadvantaged provinces, IFAD supports two government projects that seek to improve the lives of tens of thousands of poor rural families that scrape by on less than USD \$112 per year.

Through one of them, the Community-Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP), IFAD aims to use a community-based approach to help the rural poor improve their quality of life by changing factors identified as keeping them poor. Among the major project activities are ones designed to promote the sustainable use of improved agricultural and livestock technologies and the establishment of rural savings and loan facilities. The projects also seek to bring roads and water to the rural poor and to improve the ability of families to access healthcare and send their children to school. Recognizing that women meet with extra hardships at the same time that they play a key role in ensuring their families' well-being, project designs pay special attention to empowering women and improving their ability to produce both food and income.

### ENABLING THE RURAL POOR TO OVERCOME THEIR POVERTY

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is a specialized agency of the United Nations with the specific mandate of combating hunger and poverty in the most disadvantaged regions of the world. Since 1978 IFAD has financed 603 projects in 115 recipient countries and in the West Bank and Gaza for a total commitment of approximately USD \$7.7 billion in loans and grants. Through these projects, about 250 million rural people have had a chance to move out of poverty. IFAD makes the greater part of its resources available to low-income countries on very favourable terms, with up to 40 years for repayment and including a grace period of up to ten years and a service charge of 0.75% per year.

- IFAD believes that land degradation is driven by insufficient agricultural intensification relative to population and not only by excessive and inappropriate use of fertilization and pesticides in high-potential areas
- This degradation is intimately linked to low land productivity, poverty and food insecurity
- It involves about 900 million poor rural people, half of whom live in Less Favoured Areas (LFAs)
- IFAD has long targeted its own programmes on poor rural people and LFAs as its principal means of contributing to sustainable poverty reduction
- IFAD has supported people-oriented projects that have proven successful to build a win-win strategy for poverty reduction and environmental improvement
- There must be a better balance between social sector investments and investments in productive activities and infrastructure

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