



The People Behind Your Plate



Investing in rural people

The People Behind Your Plate



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Men and women farmers celebrate the rice harvest in Benue State, Nigeria, where an IFAD-supported project has helped them to increase productivity and improve their connections to markets. With the right support, rural people can lead the transformation of their communities and the achievement of global development goals.

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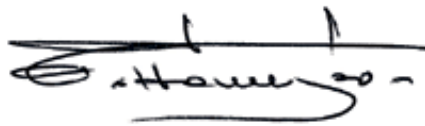
Foreword

The path to our sustainable future starts in rural areas. That is where we produce our food, where the world's richest sources of biodiversity lie, where the impacts of climate change are often especially stark.

Rural areas are also home to most of the world's poor and hungry. This cannot be allowed to continue if we are to deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind. That's why IFAD invests in rural women and men. We have extensive experience working with them and their organizations to build their livelihoods and resilience. At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting food systems – and the rural livelihoods that depend upon them – this work is even more important.

If we are to emerge from this crisis stronger than before, and looking forward to a shared sustainable future, we need prosperous, productive rural areas. We need to help rural people build resilience to climate change and other shocks, because they are the foundation of the food systems that provide nutritious food for all. At IFAD we are stepping up our efforts and partnering with rural people to fulfil the ambition of doubling our impact by 2030.

The people you will meet in this book come from rural areas across the world. Their stories are unique, but they will also resonate with you because they speak of challenges we all share as we seek to build a more sustainable future for ourselves, our families and our world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Hounbo', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Gilbert F. Hounbo
President of IFAD





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Monrbayar (left) is a woodworker who specializes in crafting traditional Mongolian tents or *gers*. He received a loan from an IFAD-supported project that allowed him to buy an electric saw and scale up his business.

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outline 17 areas essential for people and the planet to prosper now and into the future. These priorities are inescapably intertwined, and will determine the future in terms of what we call the “5Ps”: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships.

Rural women and men are at the heart of our sustainable future. These are the people who produce the food that nourishes us all, and they manage the natural resources of the planet we depend upon. Their activities create prosperity, jobs and opportunities in some of the world’s most fragile and remote settlements – the building blocks of peace. Rural development is essential for global resilience.



We need progress where poor people are and most poor people are in rural areas. If we continue to redouble our efforts, we will see an undeniable acceleration of progress.

Michael Kremer, Nobel Laureate



IFAD is a United Nations specialized agency and an international financial institution exclusively dedicated to investing in rural people. We work in the most fragile and remote areas and with the most marginalized and vulnerable people. Our investments and our work with rural people and their organizations are helping to build food systems and rural communities that are productive, resilient and sustainable.

“

IFAD's model of mutual help and partnership is very different from that of other United Nations agencies and organizations. And we sincerely believe that this ideal model will work.

Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Today, the resilience of rural people is being tested like never before. The COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting the production and marketing of food, threatening rural livelihoods and impacting food systems globally. In many contexts, the spread of conflict is exacerbating these impacts. At the same time, the outbreak of desert locusts across countries in Africa, Asia and the Arabian peninsula is disrupting agricultural production. And rural people, in particular because of their reliance on the climate and the land, are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

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It is in all our interests to keep local food systems going, protect rural communities and mitigate a health crisis as people who lose their jobs in the city head back to rural areas. The IFAD-run projects we saw in Sierra Leone give us hope that, with the right assistance, vulnerable rural people worldwide will be able to get through this difficult time.

Sabrina Dhowre Elba, model, activist and IFAD Goodwill Ambassador

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The members of a self-help group in Bungoma County, Kenya, run a milk bar that sells fresh yogurt, cheese, butter and pasteurized milk to local people.

©IFAD/Susan Beccio



©IFAD/Cristóbal Corral

A young Bolivian woman carries a baby well wrapped against the cold in a traditional sling.

Rural people – together with IFAD – are finding solutions to these and other problems. They are innovating, and adapting new technologies; they are using their own unique know-how to build their resilience. Their work, their determination and their knowledge go to the heart of our shared ambition for a sustainable future, which is at the core of the 2030 Agenda.



What is the one institution that the common rural African knows as the face of development in Africa within the span of the international institutions? It is IFAD. If you believe in tackling this challenge, if you believe in making sure that the most vulnerable are taken into account in a bottom-up perspective, if you believe that this challenge – beyond being African – is a global challenge, then IFAD needs to be supported.

Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Agency



This book shows how IFAD is partnering with rural people to overcome shocks and challenges to build prosperity and peace and to protect the planet. Through this book, we share with you rural women and men's stories, their faces, their resilience, and their dignity.

IFAD's Global Operations

Ongoing Projects





IFAD invests in rural people, empowering them to reduce poverty, increase food security, improve nutrition and strengthen resilience. Since 1978, we have provided US\$22.6 billion in grants and low-interest loans to projects that have reached an estimated 513 million people.

We have 203 ongoing projects in 90 countries and Gaza and the West Bank.

Between 2016 and 2018, IFAD investments enabled 62 million people to achieve positive economic mobility, 50 million people to improve their production, 50 million people to access markets, and 26 million people to improve their resilience.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by all 193 United Nations Member States in 2015. They provide a blueprint for eliminating poverty and hunger, protecting the planet, and promoting prosperity for all. At the heart of the SDGs are five critical elements: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships (5Ps). Each of these 5Ps holds the key to unlocking a brighter, more sustainable future for all. And each of these 5Ps is fundamentally related to the transformation of rural areas.

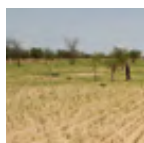
People

Rural people are more likely to be deprived of the basic ingredients of a decent life. Yet investments to transform rural areas contribute to building a sustainable future for us all. We have seen how these investments reduce poverty (SDG 1) and help feed people in rural and urban areas (SDGs 2, 11 and 12). And we have seen the opportunities for women's empowerment (SDG 5) and for extending access to healthcare and education (SDGs 3 and 4) that result.



Planet

Rural people, through their work and cultures, are intimately attached to the natural environment. They are custodians of essential ecosystems and of the world's richest sources of biodiversity. By investing in them, we can support their work to manage essential natural resources like water (SDG 6), find solutions to climate change (SDGs 7 and 13), and safeguard the environment (SDGs 14 and 15).



Prosperity

Inclusive rural transformation creates shared prosperity. When rural people thrive, higher incomes and profits are injected into rural economies, where they create jobs and growth (SDGs 8 and 9). This contributes to wider economic development and equality (SDG 10). In particular, economic growth in agriculture is 2-3 times more effective at reducing poverty than growth generated by other sectors (SDG 1).



Peace

Investing in rural areas is central to achieving and maintaining peace (SDG 16). Inclusive rural transformation contributes to addressing many of these drivers of conflict by promoting sustainable food systems (SDG 2), finding solutions for the management and use of natural resources (SDGs 6, 14 and 15), and by creating shared growth and prosperity (SDG 8).



Partnerships

Partnership with and for rural people are needed to accelerate progress across the SDGs (SDG 17). This means involving rural people and their organizations in policy dialogue. It means consulting them and ensuring they have a voice in public and private investments. And it means recognizing the energy, knowledge and skills of rural people can help us solve some of the most urgent challenges the world is facing.



Did you know?

Rural people are at the heart of humanity's prospects for a sustainable future. Here are some ways that rural people make a difference in our lives.

Small-farming systems produce an estimated **50 per cent** of the **world's food calories** on **30 per cent** of the agricultural land.

Around **63 per cent** of the world's **poorest people** work in agriculture.

And in total, almost **80 per cent** of the world's poorest people **live in rural areas**.

Women make up **43 per cent** of the world's farmers and **agricultural workforce**, but they face discrimination and many barriers to access the resources they need to succeed.

If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could **increase yields** on their farms by **20–30 per cent**.

Nearly **1 billion** of the world's **1.2 billion youth** (aged 15–24) **live in developing countries**, about half of them in rural areas. Rural development can provide them with jobs and a future, and can also help feed the world.

Small-scale farmers in the developing world are bearing the brunt of climate change even though they have contributed little to causing the problem.

Unless we take action to increase resilience, **climate change** will push more than **100 million people into poverty**. Half of this increase in poverty will be due to the effects of climate change on agriculture, which will also threaten food supplies.

Investing in rural areas works. Economic growth in agriculture is **2–3 times more effective** at reducing poverty and food insecurity than growth in other sectors.

PEOPLE

Rural areas are home to some of the world's most vulnerable and neglected people – among them, rural women, youth and indigenous peoples. Creating opportunities for these women and men to participate in the economic and political life of societies is crucial to ending marginalization, poverty and hunger. That's why IFAD-supported projects are centred on people, recognizing that rural women and men are central to the ambition of the SDGs. IFAD is the only multilateral development institution solely dedicated to investing in rural areas to reduce poverty and hunger and build resilience.







The sky is our limit.

We are going to continue to grow to compete with other bigger companies. Here, we are only women in our cooperative, and we are up to the standard. After just two years, our business is already completely sustainable. When the project closes, we are good to go!

Asabe Danjuma, Chairperson
Tudun Wada South Rice Processors

Rural women hold the fabric of rural communities together – producing food, nurturing young people and caring for the land. The Tudun Wada South Rice Processors women's cooperative is thriving thanks to the joint efforts of IFAD, the Government of Nigeria and the private sector. The 75-member-strong cooperative has seen life-changing transformations in the community, including new jobs from sustainable businesses, increased incomes and greater food security.

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©IFAD/Pablo Corral Vega

Olga Osjo Palomino took training to improve her crop production in Andahuaylas, Peru. Now she and her husband terrace their land, grow corn and potatoes in rows, sell their surplus products at the local market and share their expertise with a local producers group. Increasing access to markets, finance and knowledge for the most marginalized groups, including women, youth and indigenous peoples, is essential for rural and global development.



About half of the world's young people live in rural areas, 57 per cent of which have great agricultural potential. Jobs, livelihood opportunities and training for young rural people are essential if they are to contribute to building a better future for themselves and their communities.

©IFAD/Michael Benanav

Mengistu Leza grows indigenous tree saplings in the Ethiopian highlands. He saved the payments he received for ecosystem services in the bank and put the money towards his children's school fees and their upkeep while in school. Rural people are custodians of natural resources and play a key part in responding to the effects of climate change.

©IFAD/Petterik Wiggers



Robert Maeobia, coconut farmer, at work in the coconut oil mill in Manaere Village, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands. Often forgotten and marginalized, rural people who live on remote islands are key partners. Rural development projects help them achieve their aspirations and contribute to global goals.

©IFAD/Todd M. Henry



A rural woman from the mountains of Nepal who took part in an IFAD-supported project to connect people to value chains in Surkhet. If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30 per cent. IFAD is uniquely placed to transform the lives of rural women and their communities.

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Moufida Sassi started her own cheese business in rural Tunisia using the milk produced by her twelve goats. “I used to struggle to survive. Now I have money to pay for my sons’ education. The first thing I did when I started to earn money was buy a washing machine. That helps me save time that I can spend running my business.” Her story shows how rural development helps people start new businesses, gain new skills and improve their lives.

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Huang Shi Jiu is the leader of a community-run mushroom cooperative in Jianshanzi village, China, which employs more than 200 people. Rising incomes and urbanization mean more demand for smallholders' products — an opportunity for them to access new markets and increase their incomes, and to create jobs across food systems.



Fishermen in Madagascar haul their boat. Fisheries and aquaculture support the livelihoods of between 10 per cent and 12 per cent of the world's population. Small-scale fishers face many challenges, from climate change to conflicts with large-scale operators. IFAD supports fisheries and aquaculture as part of a broader integrated approach incorporating environmentally friendly and inclusive crop and livestock production.

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©IFAD/David F. Paqui

The lack of economic opportunities and social and financial services in rural areas can drive rural people, especially the young, to migrate to urban centres in search of work. This weakens rural communities, breaks up families and can lead to urban overcrowding and even unrest. El Hadj Ba of Senegal was convinced that leaving his village was the only option to provide a living for his family, so he took a hard and dangerous job in the mining sector. Then he got a job under the IFAD-supported PADAER project helping to build a dam in his hometown and was able to return. With his earnings he invested in a mule-drawn plough, a cow and seven goats. “I’m happy he’s returned,” says his wife, Maïmouna Barry. “He’s earning more and our situation has improved. We can now raise our four children together.”



Morjina Begum, 25, raises 300 ducks on her farm in Sundorgonj, Bangladesh. Rural development can contribute to both women's empowerment and better nutrition for themselves and their families.

©IFAD/GMB Akash

A man extracts oil from sesame seeds in his village of Mangalmé, Chad. With investment, rural people can grow their businesses, build stronger communities, and help banish hunger and poverty.

©IFAD/Barbara Gravelli

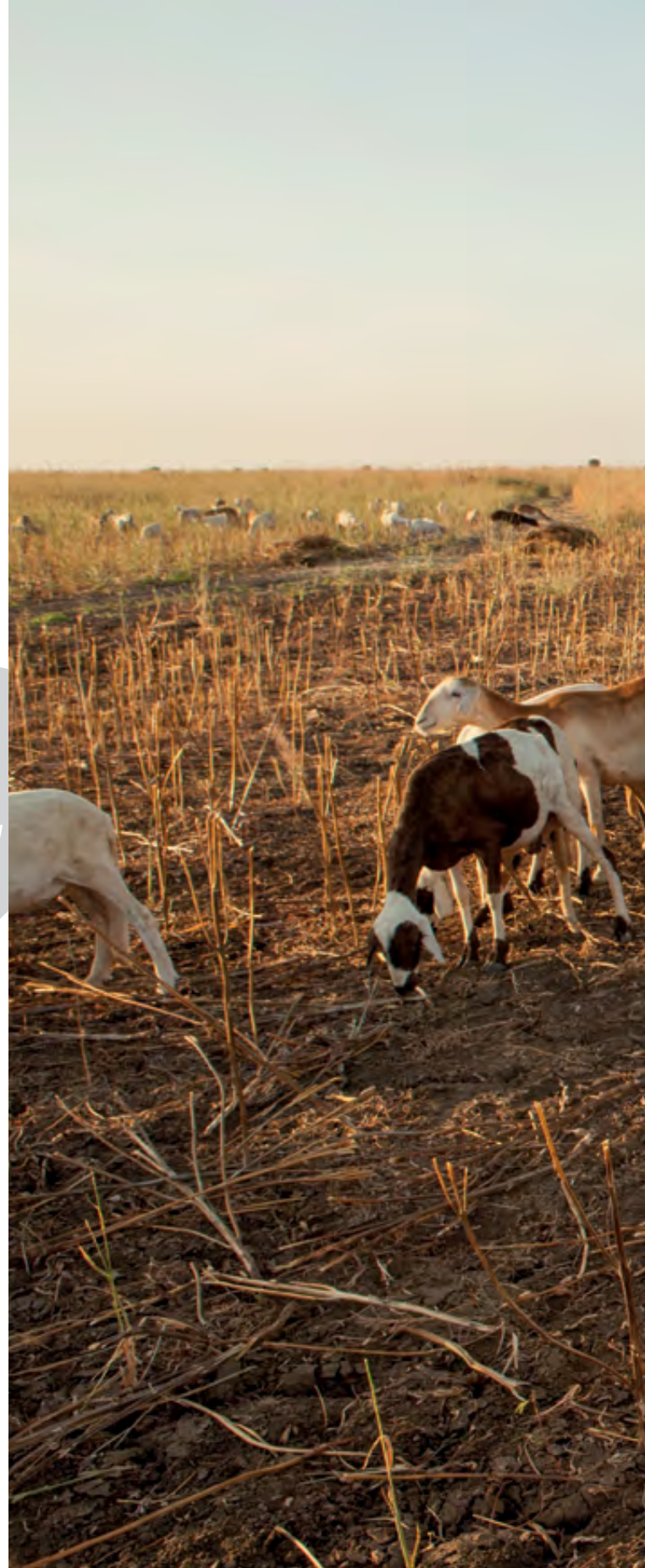


I didn't know how to take care of animals before. Then I was trained as a para-veterinarian and I became famous. I provide services to all the people in my village and the villages nearby.

Assad Mohammed Idriss, para-veterinarian
Kaja Village, Sudan

More than 800 million poor small-scale producers raise livestock, and the demand for livestock products will more than double over the next 20 years. Yet 85 per cent of livestock keepers around the world remain poor. They will need to become more productive, more efficient and more resilient to cope with climate change, and to meet the growing market demand. That's why IFAD invests in the health and productivity of small ruminants through projects like the Supporting Small-scale Traditional Rainfed Producers Programme. Rural people who depend on livestock for their livelihoods and food security have increased their knowledge of animal breeding, production and nutrition, leading to more, better quality milk and meat.

©IFAD/Marco Salustro





PLANET

Natural resources are central to rural people's work and cultures, and to us all. Ecosystems and the world's richest sources of biodiversity are under their stewardship. IFAD works with rural people to develop and enhance innovations in the way they manage natural resources – contributing to a more sustainable planet for the future. This includes water management, promoting renewable energy, and improving sustainability in agriculture, fisheries and forestry. Adaptation to climate change – a direct threat to small producers and everyone who depends on them, whether urban or rural – is crucial for rural resilience.

Farmers inspect a newly planted field in the hot, dry region of Aguié, Niger. About 82 per cent of the country's population is rural and depends on agriculture for their livelihoods.

©IFAD/David Rose







Before it cost us fifty reals (US\$9) a month to buy gas. Now we produce gas with the biodigester outside our home, so we can use that money to buy other things we need.

Ebaldina Jesus Santiago and her husband, Jailson de Jesus Mendes
Kirirí indigenous group, Bahia, Brazil

A rural development project in the semi-arid region of Bahia supported by IFAD has helped the Kiriri people improve their income and quality of life. Biodigesters convert cattle manure and water into methane gas that provides a clean and affordable source of energy for cooking stoves. The by-product is used as organic fertilizer in the fields.

©IFAD/Lianne Milton/Panos



@IFAD/Amadou Keita

Water is essential for life, and in agriculture it is as necessary as the land itself. But most farmers in Africa depend on rain, and with a changing climate and more frequent droughts, increasing irrigation is essential for building a secure food supply. These boys in Mali could be the farmers and rural agripreneurs of tomorrow if governments, the development community, the private sector and other partners invest in their future. Resource management has to be inclusive and sustainable so that no one is left behind and competition over resources doesn't lead to instability and conflict.



Ahmad Helalat lives in Wadi Mousa, Jordan. He gets water from the Wadi Mousa Waste Water Treatment Plant, which supplies farmers in the area. Secure food systems and stable societies require that all people have access to sufficient water of appropriate quality.

©IFAD/Lana Slezić



Crescent-shaped excavations called “half moons” catch rainwater and protect seedlings from the wind in Aguié, Niger. The technique is used in the fight against desertification in the region. Over 2 billion people currently live in countries with high water stress.

©IFAD/David Rose



A lone rancher guides a herd of animals through a cold and barren Bolivian landscape. Rural people live and work in some of the world's most remote and challenging areas. They contribute to maintaining often fragile ecosystems that contain some of the world's richest sources of biodiversity. Their ability to sustainably manage these resources is bound up with their unique experience, which forms the backbone of their livelihoods. Indigenous peoples' traditions and knowledge have great potential to help solve some of the world's most urgent challenges.

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Lucy Teyagirwa is a volunteer DJ at Kilosa Community Radio, 102 FM, in the town of Kilosa, United Republic of Tanzania. Rural people need access to knowledge and technology as well as finance and services.

©IFAD/Mwanzo Millinga





©IFAD/Duong Tien Vu

The impacts of climate change are seriously affecting the lives of poor rural people, which is why IFAD investments are focusing on resilience-building and adaptation. Increased salinity and droughts have hurt coconut production in Ben Tre Province, Viet Nam. At the age of 70, farmer Nguyen Van Them developed his own model for raising earthworms, frogs and shrimp, with financing from an IFAD-supported project. “At first, there were a lot of people who laughed and said that what I was doing would not take me anywhere,” he says. “I slowly showed them the results of my work. My family’s economic standing has increased significantly since I made this farming system.”



©IFAD/Susan Beccio

These residents of Kalangala Island, Uganda, prepare for an early morning fishing trip on Lake Victoria. Freshwater ecosystems cover 15 per cent of the world's surface area and support biodiversity. However, climate change, human population growth and ineffective water management threaten the sustainability of these sources of fresh water. Rural people are key to protecting this life-giving resource, and their livelihoods depend on it.



Sela Fifita weaves a traditional Tongan basket known as a *kato alu* in the Petani Community Hall, 'Eua, Tonga. Like other small island developing states, Tonga is feeling the effects of climate change and more extreme and erratic weather. It is often in the path of tropical storms that cause extensive flooding, but also often prone to drought. IFAD is supporting community-driven development and the construction of community halls – multi-purpose buildings made to withstand category 5 tropical cyclones, offering safe refuge to the local community. The roofs are designed to collect rainwater runoff in 10,000-gallon water tanks, providing a source of clean drinking water. And women gather in these communal spaces to weave and make other traditional handicrafts for sale. This is a good example of a multiple-benefit solution for vulnerable rural people.

©IFAD/Todd M. Henry



Sao Tome and Principe faces the vulnerabilities typical of small island developing states. Community development helps residents deal with unexpected shocks by setting up commodity value chains and building their livelihoods. Here, a young man spreads cocoa beans out to dry. He's part of a cocoa growers' cooperative made up of 2,000 families, which is establishing relationships with buyers to ensure farmers are fairly compensated for their hard work.

©IFAD/Joanne Levitan

“My family has been farming since my grandfather’s generation. I have been tea farming since I was 16 years old. We also grew rice and maize in the old days. In the past, weather conditions were much more in harmony with the growing season. Now we have to watch out when it rains. There is less rain, but when it rains, it rains very heavily.

Nong Thi Thao, tea farmer
My Bang commune, Viet Nam

Household income increased by more than 25 per cent thanks to the Agriculture, Farmers and Rural Areas Support Project. This IFAD-supported project helped rural producers gain access to markets by connecting them to private agribusiness investors. Greater income has enhanced quality of life with greater household food security and better nutrition.

©IFAD/Susan Beccio





PROSPERITY

Rural people's work is central to building shared prosperity. Their activities create jobs and develop markets, as well as producing essential goods – especially food. IFAD helps them access finance and services, innovate, and build the institutions and infrastructure they need to connect to markets. Their enterprise and energy, in particular within food systems, is crucial to providing healthy food in both rural and urban areas. And with higher and more stable incomes, rural households are able to keep their children in school, preparing the way for a better future.

A man in Baguineda, Mali, bagging rice before delivering. Generally, an area of 0.80 hectares produces 22 bags of 100 kg each.

©IFAD/Amadou Keita







“Before the programme started, we just planted and hoped for what God would give us. Now we know – for sure – we will get more food.

Victoria Muteti, farmer
Makueni County, Kenya

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In January 2020, Victoria was able to harvest more than 2,500 kilograms of sorghum from her 2.5-acre farm – far more than the 1,000 kg she harvested in 2019. Victoria owes this success to an e-voucher initiative she enrolled in under a programme implemented by the Government of Kenya and funded jointly with IFAD and the European Union. She received certified seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and post-harvest items, along with training in good agricultural practices, learning new ways to till her land and safely apply agrochemicals. Victoria's nutrition and food security improved, too. Before she joined the programme, she depended on government assistance between each harvest. Now she has a surplus of crops to sell and can earn an income. Her diet has also been enriched. She can now eat some of the sorghum she grows, instead of saving it all for her chickens. She has also invested part of her income in a poultry house and a cow, which will further fortify her diet and bring additional revenue.

@IFAD/Edward Echwalu



Members of the Sohag Mahila Samity Women's Group in Ghaturi Village, Bangladesh, gather to learn about microfinance. Women's groups are key institutions to help build just, equitable and peaceful societies. IFAD works with these groups, creating opportunities for greater political and economic participation of women, and supporting their role as peace builders.

©IFAD/Fumiko Nakai



A young worker at a potato processing plant in Pucayacu Parish, Ecuador. Productive and profitable businesses throughout the food system are crucial to providing sufficient nutritious food, creating jobs and stimulating local economies.

©IFAD/Carla Francescutti

Creating decent work in rural areas and strengthening economies means enabling people to invest in themselves and their businesses. They often are short of resources but have plenty of ingenuity and determination. Christian Ocran, a carpenter in Ghana, explains that “The Rural Enterprises Programme helped me acquire a planing machine. Now, I get all the business of planing wood in these parts. It’s very, very, good business.”

©IFAD/Nana Kofi Acquah





©IFAD/Andrew Esiebo/Panos

Cement trader Toussou Odile is taking stock of supplies at her store in Adjagbo, Benin. She used to sell maize, but it was getting hard to make a profit so she added cement to her inventory. “With the small loan I got, I was able to diversify my business. Customers who wanted maize often bought on credit and then had difficulties paying me. Cement buyers pay on delivery.” Access to credit made it possible for Toussou to grow her business, increase her income and raise her family’s standard of living.



Chum Lyvon (left) belongs to a women's group in Kampot, Cambodia. The women make fresh egg noodles and sell to village farmers. Modern machinery can raise productivity in rural enterprises, sustaining better livelihoods and the people who depend on them.

©IFAD/Susan Beccio

Kaddy Jameh has a biogas-powered stove in her kitchen in Sintet village, The Gambia. "I have stopped going to look for firewood from the bush. The most amazing part is that they used our local resources to create this wonderful solution for me." Clean energy is a triple win, cutting down on the time women spend collecting fuelwood, reducing deforestation and improving health through smokeless cooking.

©IFAD/Nana Kofi Acquah



Women gather vegetables from their group farm in Handuk, West Papua, Indonesia. Vegetables are crucial for local diets and nutrition but also create commercial opportunities for small-scale farmers to grow their businesses.

©IFAD/Roger Arnold

Jalila Tiss is the owner of a computer literacy and training centre for young children in Ouid El-Kahil village, Tunisia. She had the idea of setting up her own business but did not know where to start. She received help from a rural development project to formulate, document and present her business plan to the bank for a small loan. She received the equivalent of about \$2,900 at a 5 per cent interest rate.

©IFAD/Susan Beccio





©IFAD/David Paqui

Mariamo Fermino took part in training in hygiene and nutrition, fish preservation and marketing with a rural development project called ProPESCA in Mozambique. She learned all the skills she needed to diversify and expand her business. “ProPESCA didn’t give me fish – it taught me how to fish,” she says. “It empowered me. Today, I can afford more than three nutritious meals a day. I can pay tuition fees for my husband, keep my sister in school and give my mother money when she needs it.”

I was able to buy a second-hand van for deliveries and the land on which this bakery stands. I also paid for my three children's education, and we're now adding to the house. If not for RuMEPP, I wouldn't have been able to do any of this.

Sally Pepito, Mount Zion Bakery owner
Tabuk City, Kalinga

Eunil Pepito and Jojo Oggas pack freshly baked coffee-flavoured cookies at Sally Pepito's Mount Zion Bakery in Tabuk City, in the Philippines. These are just an example of the variety of flavours available here - others include peanut, malunggay (also known as moringa, or drumstick), cacao, squash, unoy rice (red rice) and carrot. Sally used to run a much smaller operation until she got some support from the Rural Microenterprise Promotion Programme (RuMEPP). It provided Sally with baking training, and facilitated two loans which she invested in her bakery. Government agencies lent her machinery and designed her packaging. Her business has boomed since, and she now employs three staff full-time and two students part-time.

© IFAD/Irshad Khan





PEACE

Some of the main drivers of conflict and instability – hunger, inequality, youth unemployment, and disputes over natural resources – have their roots in rural areas. But when rural people have the tools they need to feed themselves and others, to create opportunities for young people and to sustainably manage natural resources, societies are more equal, more stable, and more peaceful. IFAD has a long history of working in the most fragile places, developing the institutions and opportunities rural people need to build equitable and resilient societies, and to contribute to long-lasting peace.

A girl picks lotus flowers in Galgamuwa, Sri Lanka. IFAD has worked in Sri Lanka for over 30 years. Since the end of conflict, IFAD has supported development and stability by promoting sustainable management of rich natural resources.

©IFAD/GMB Akash







“We are working hard to make sure that the improvements we have made are sustainable and that we pass on to our children the things we have learned. Our children will take over from us some day. Our cocoa plantations are our succession plan for a better future.

Clifton Melza, cocoa farmer
Solomon Islands

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In the aftermath of ethnic violence and civil conflict, the Solomon Islands focused on local economic development, including greater involvement of rural communities in decisions. After an IFAD-supported project came to his village in 2018, Clifton received tools and training and learned to grow seedlings and graft twigs from improved varieties. Yields, quality of harvests and income have all increased. “With our higher income, we can pay the school fees for our kids more easily, improve our housing and take better care of our health,” he says.

© IFAD/Todd M. Henry



The livelihoods and food security of 1.5 million Afghan nomads depend on livestock. The Kuchi tribe are among the poorest and most marginalized groups in Afghanistan and make their living herding sheep and goats. Decades of conflict and drought have destroyed grazing areas and increased animal disease. Improving livestock health benefits not only the nomads, but the whole of Afghanistan.

©IFAD/Dutch Committee for Afghanistan

These Colombian women participated in a project that tackled inequality and poverty among 50,000 rural households across 17 departments of Colombia. It targeted small farmers, indigenous groups, Afro-Latino communities, rural young people, families that had been forcibly displaced and households headed by women. Improving living conditions, income and employment in post-conflict rural areas is a precondition for sustainable peace.

©IFAD/Panos Pictures/Xavier Cervera



A woman collects cotton on her farm in Sindh, Pakistan. With support from an IFAD-funded programme, she was able to take a loan of about US\$110 to buy goats, expand her business and diversify her sources of income. Investing in women's economic participation in their rural communities is also an investment in their role as peace builders. IFAD's work in Pakistan has empowered women, created opportunities and contributed to a peaceful environment.

©IFAD/Asad Zaidi





©IFAD/Mia Madsen

Access to assets and services, including finance, is particularly difficult for disadvantaged groups, including women. But when support is given, it can transform every aspect of life, enabling women to escape poverty, reduce inequality and build harmonious communities. Buthaina Ahmed Ibrahim, a young farmer in Sudan, has taken out six loans through the ABSUMI project. As a result, she now farms on five times more land than she used to. And thanks to the extra income, she has added a room to her house and new furniture, and can pay for her children's schooling and medicines. An environmental loan allowed her to buy a gas stove, eliminating the need for fuelwood and coal. She has experienced other benefits as well. "I now know how to save money and how to budget," she says, and "I take part in decision-making at home, and I now have confidence in myself."



Misago Florence received a cow through a rural development project in Burundi and, as part of a “solidarity chain”, she has already donated another cow to someone else in the community. She gets eight litres of milk a day, some for household use and some to sell. Rural people can be vulnerable to exclusion, discrimination and conflict. Investing in these communities creates sustainable livelihoods, better living standards and social stability.

©IFAD/Andre Francois

Raising pigeons is one of the income-generating activities pursued in Beit Hanoun, Gaza. Women and young people are more resilient to conflict and instability when they are enabled to develop microenterprises.

©IFAD/Wendy Sue Lamm

After years of war, drought, political instability and famine, the construction of sand water storage dams in Somaliland guarantees a steady supply of water. The substantial benefits of the dams and associated shallow wells – along with other project investments to improve agriculture and livestock productivity, the quality of rural health and sanitation facilities – have triggered socio-economic change that is likely to be sustained in the future.

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This photo of a youngster playing with bubbles in Cameroon first appeared in *Food in Africa*, a book published by World Press Photo and IFAD. The project provided training to African photojournalists. IFAD understands that when rural communities thrive, children can play and learn, and look forward to a peaceful, productive future.

©IFAD/Rodrigue Mbock



Issam Mohammad Hamoodi lives in the Syrian city of Latakia. After she lost her husband in 2017, she received support from the Integrated Livestock Development Project, which helped rural households by giving them small loans to buy livestock and improve their standard of living. She received a loan to buy a cow, which later gave birth to two calves. “I sold the milk and made cheese and yogurt, and benefited from the income in supporting my lovely family. Then I decided to start my own business. I sold the cows and opened a local bakery in a lovely mountainous area full of trees.”

©IFAD/Mouhab Alawar



“My father and I have been selling milk in the local community for years. Since we joined the producers group, we can sell our milk for a higher price. With the extra money we’re earning, we’ve been able to buy modern equipment and four more cows.

Nisveta Cirkic, dairy farmer
Vrbanci village, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Agricultural development can create jobs in the wake of conflict and contribute to peace, while also helping to reduce poverty and increase the supply of food. Small-scale livestock producers, many of whom are women, can gain from stronger commercial links, private sector involvement and access to markets. Access to microfinance and essential services can help them transform their lives and their communities.

© IFAD/Paolo Marchetti





PARTNERSHIPS

The SDGs cannot be reached without partnerships – especially considering the indivisibility of the goals. This means partnerships at the highest levels to expand outreach, share solutions and mobilize resources. But partnerships also need to go down to grassroots level, so rural people can have a voice in their future and contribute to the development of their communities. IFAD brings rural people together at the community level, but also builds collaboration between their organizations and larger public and private organizations investing in the future of rural areas.

Strawberry farmer Mustafa Gedikli discusses the progression of his young plants with an extension worker in the town of Okçu in Giresun province, Turkey. Sharing of expertise has been a key factor for the high yields farmers in this region have enjoyed.

©IFAD/Susan Beccio







“ They provide the technology, seeds and inputs to grow the taro, and buy all the taro I grow at a price we have already agreed on. Thanks to this contract, I now have a stable market and a guaranteed profit.

U Zaw Oo, farmer
Myanmar

”

Moving from subsistence to commercially viable enterprise can be life-changing, with impacts on nutrition, health, education and more. U Zaw Oo is benefiting from a new partnership with the Myanmar Agri Foods Company, which contracts farmers to grow taro, long bean, okra and pumpkin.

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©IFAD/Edward Echwalu

Rural development produces jobs both on and off the farm. The Government of Rwanda has begun investing in the development of silk value chains. With rising demand from Asia, the production of high-quality silk products offered strong export opportunities. To tap into growing global markets, Rwanda's National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB) partnered with HEWorks, a Korean silk manufacturer.





Dilli Timalasena inspects spice packets as they come off the production line at the Bhattarai Masala factory in Surkhet, Nepal. Technology and knowledge can enable rural people to add value to agricultural projects and improve their livelihoods and quality of life.

©IFAD/Sanjit Das/Panos



Erika Beatriz Hernandez was celebrated as the Quinceañera on her 15th birthday in El Salvador. Across Latin America, this is marked as an important milestone in a girl's life. When we invest in rural areas we invest in each other and in our collective future.

©IFAD/Pablo Corral Vega



©IFAD/GMB Akash Women carry vegetables to a market in Luang Prabang Province, Lao People's Democratic Republic. Production and economic activities stretching from villages to cities form a multi-faceted flow of goods, services, capital and people along the rural-urban continuum. Like the SDGs, rural and urban areas are interdependent.



Najia Lrhoute is president of the Amghrass Women's Association, a group that pools resources to raise sheep in Al Haouz Province, Morocco. Women leaders are crucial in making changes to norms and practices that often contribute to poverty, exclusion and conflict.

©IFAD/Susan Beccio

The 240 members of the COOPalmilla in Palmilla, Dominican Republic, process *cereza*, a local variety of cherry, into pulp and juice for local and export markets. Farmers organizations and cooperatives are an essential part of partnership models. Cooperatives help rural people unlock economies of scale, take advantage of opportunities and advocate for themselves.

©IFAD/Joanne Levitan





©IFAD/Rodney Quarcoo

IFAD advocates on behalf of rural people to highlight rural issues. IFAD Goodwill Ambassadors Idris and Sabrina Dhowre Elba visited IFAD projects in Sierra Leone, met with participants and learned about their lives, challenges and achievements, and then promoted rural development on the global stage, speaking to media and meeting with world leaders.

Employees of the Finetia Company in Sturzovca village, Republic of Moldova, package croissants for sale. The private sector offers enormous potential for rural people to better their lives and livelihoods.

©IFAD/Paolo Marchetti



Marta Yat Chipel and her co-workers pack green beans for export at the Agrisem Cooperative in Cholá, Guatemala.

©IFAD/Santiago Albert Pons



To revive the group, I built their capacity in the production and commercialization of shea butter. More than 40 women came on board and we reopened the centre to process shea based on demand.

Ajara Ibrahim Taimako, processor and marketer
Kanvilli Women's Shea Centre, Ghana

"I benefited from several marketing trainings and study tours," Ajara says, speaking of the project she participated in. Her group also connected with a major client, the Savannah Fruits Company, which has a public-private partnership for the development and processing of shea. The centre also found customers as far away as New York. Production rose from 20 tons of shea butter in 2012 to 88 tons three years later. Income correspondingly increased. During the off nut season, to diversify the women's incomes, the centre helps them process moringa and baobab oil. "Now my income has increased," Ajara says. "I also produce soya milk and yoghurt that I sell to hotels, restaurants and private clients." She hopes that her children will take over the business.

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Cover: This project helped improve the livelihoods of indigenous peoples living in mountainous farming communities. Philippines. IFAD/G.M.B. Akash

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"With IFAD's Recipes for Change Campaign I have seen first-hand how family farmers are not just living but also, with IFAD's support, thriving on the climate front line, building their resilience and working for a food-secure future. This book tells their stories."

Carlo Cracco

Michelin-starred Italian
celebrity chef

"These poignant images remind us food is about more than what we eat. It is about the myriad ways in which we produce, process and build our livelihoods. Rural people, especially smallholder farmers, are the most crucial actors in our food systems. With determination and ingenuity, they provide food, manage natural resources, and support families and communities despite many challenges. These are the faces behind our food systems and their livelihoods must matter to all of us."

Agnes Kalibata

UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy
for the Food Systems Summit
2021

"These powerful images remind me of the courage and hard work of the rural people I dris and I met in countries where IFAD is investing in the world's poorest people to create a future of hope, prosperity and peace for all."

Sabrina Dhowre Elba

IFAD Goodwill
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