

# The Development Advocate

28 January 2013 • Volume 2

Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.



## Brazil ECO-STOVES EMPOWER INDIGENOUS WOMEN

A Kaiowá-Guarani indigenous family proudly using their eco-stove for the first time. (Gilmar Ganache/UNDP Brazil)

BY DANIEL DE CASTRO AND  
JACOB SAID

**Panambizinho, Brazil**—The sun was still rising and Delma Gonçalves, 41, had already spent two hours trekking to the place where she and the rest of her settlement collected firewood. The return trip was even worse: under the hot sun, she carried a bundle of wood weighing 20 kilogrammes on her shoulder. Gonçalves is a member of the Kaiowá Guarani indigenous people, the nation's second largest indigenous group, who live on the Panambizinho land located 250 kilometres from the capital city of Mato Grosso do Sul state in west-central Brazil.

Three times a week, for many years, this has been Gonçalves's morning routine.

"I had a really sore back. I would

get home so tired that I couldn't find the energy to cook," says Gonçalves. Every day she would make the fire for lunch on the floor, using a few cans to protect it from the wind and a refrigerator cooling coil as an improvised grill.

In addition to worsening her back pain, the floor fire filled the house with smoke, hurting the health of Gonçalves' children, who suffered from respiratory problems like asthma, pneumonia and bronchitis. But all this has started to change with the arrival of high-efficiency wood stoves that have helped to transform the lives of dozens of indigenous families in Panambizinho.

The technology to construct these so-called "eco-stoves" was developed by a group of Brazilian non-governmental organizations through a UNDP project promoting

low-cost and green energy access in Brazil's semi-arid northeast. It is currently being adapted to serve the needs of the Kaiowá Guarani people in the Brazilian tropical savannah. In contrast with traditional wood stoves constructed with materials like cement and iron, this new stove uses low-cost materials that are found in the region like mud, sand and clay.

The UNDP initiative is part of a joint programme developed with other UN agencies, with the goal of promoting food and nutrition security within indigenous communities, especially for women and children. In all, the project benefits about 53,000 indigenous people across the country, both directly and indirectly. The stove has been considered a model for sustainable technology and will hopefully be used in other similar projects

*Continued on page 2*

### LETTER FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR



Helen Clark with Executive Board representatives of countries with winning entries in the 2012 contest. (Dylan Lowthian/UNDP)

Dear Readers,

I am pleased to introduce the second issue of *The Development Advocate*, an annual publication showcasing the twelve winning entries of UNDP's storytelling competition which showcases our global development results.

As in last year's issue, these stories highlight UNDP's critical work on poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and the environment and sustainable development. The common thread running through these stories is the change and benefits we bring to the lives of some of the poorest and most vulnerable individuals around the world.

The twelve-member jury this year included both new and familiar faces. It included representatives of the Permanent Missions of Australia and Canada to the UN and prominent print and broadcast international journalists—many of whom focus on development stories.

All the stories in these pages exemplify our tagline, "Empowered lives. Resilient nations." They remind us that people are and always will be the centre of UNDP's work.

Sincerely,

*Helen Clark*  
Helen Clark

#### EMPOWERING WOMEN TO FIGHT POVERTY



UNDP Equips Bangladeshi Women with Microloans • PAGE 3



#### PLANTING A SEED FOR THE FUTURE

UNDP Introduces Organic Farming Techniques in China • PAGE 4

#### VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR NEW CAREERS



UNDP Provides Jobs Skills in Georgia • PAGE 9

## BRAZIL: ECO-STOVES

continued from page 1

across the globe, a major goal of the programme.

### BENEFITS OF ECO-STOVES

The stove's materials and design help to retain heat longer; a special clay plate over the fire acts as a barrier to energy waste and conducts heat better. As a result, the plates stay hot for up to five hours, even after the fire has gone out, making it easier for people to cook food without constant supervision.

Thanks to the new stove, the health of everyone in Gonçalves' family has improved, especially that of her children who, in addition to eating better, now have fewer respiratory problems. The new stove uses a chimney to keep the house well-ventilated and removes smoke and other by-products. The environment also benefits from such stoves, since they produce significantly less greenhouse gasses due to a more efficient use of firewood.

The stove's high energy efficiency makes it possible to use thin twigs, dry leaves, corn shucks and bark as fuel, all products that are

## RESULTS

• **53,000 indigenous people in Brazil lead healthier lives due to the introduction of the new eco-stoves**

### DONORS: MDG Achievement Fund

easy to find around the yard, where families generally plant gardens and trees. One of the aims of the project is to encourage families to

stop using heavy firewood. Lighter and smaller wood is readily available around the house, and diminishes the environmental impact on nearby forests.

Gonçalves' long journeys to look for wood have ended. She now goes to her backyard to pick up small branches that have fallen from trees.

"I use my extra time to take care of my kids and the house. I weed the yard, do the laundry and sweep the porch. I also take care of the garden," she says as she drinks her *tereré*, a traditional *yerba maté* drink from the region.

Fire has spiritual significance for the Kaiowá people: it is a synonym for purification. Generally, fire is controlled by women, whose role is to unify and feed the family. Around the fire—now sustainable and healthy—Gonçalves and other indigenous women in Panambizinho nourish not only their families' daily needs but also a long-respected tradition. ■



Delma and family socialize around their new eco-stove while lunch is being prepared. (Jacob Said/UNDP Brazil)



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**PUBLISHED BY**  
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Communications Cluster

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## CONTENTS

<b>BRAZIL:</b> ECO-STOVES EMPOWER INDIGENOUS WOMEN	<b>1</b>
<b>BANGLADESH:</b> EMPOWERING WOMEN TO FIGHT POVERTY	<b>3</b>
<b>CHINA:</b> FARMERS PLANT A SEED FOR A CHEMICAL-FREE FUTURE	<b>4</b>
<b>DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO:</b> COMMUNITY CENTRES HELP PEOPLE LEARN TO LIVE AGAIN	<b>5</b>
<b>ETHIOPIA:</b> COPING WITH DROUGHT AND CLIMATE CHANGE	<b>5</b>
<b>EGYPT:</b> ADAPTING TECHNOLOGY TO LOCAL NEEDS	<b>6</b>
<b>OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY:</b> PROVIDING SAFE WATER IN GAZA	<b>6</b>
<b>SUDAN:</b> LEGAL AID HELPS THE VULNERABLE IN DARFUR PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS	<b>7</b>
<b>MONGOLIA:</b> MANAGING NATURAL RESOURCES BETTER	<b>8</b>
<b>GEORGIA:</b> VOCATIONAL TRAINING EQUIPS YOUTH FOR CAREERS	<b>9</b>
<b>KAZAKHSTAN:</b> CHAMPION FOR THE DISABLED	<b>10</b>
<b>COLOMBIA:</b> MOVING FROM TRAGEDY TO DEVELOPMENT	<b>11</b>
<b>SPECIAL:</b> TOP SOCCER PLAYERS SHINE IN UNDP'S 10 <sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MATCH AGAINST POVERTY	<b>11</b>
<b>UNDP ACROSS THE MAP</b>	<b>12</b>

## STORYTELLING CONTEST JURY MEMBERS



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**Alister Doyle** is currently the environment correspondent for Reuters News and has held that position since 2005. Based in Oslo, the job has taken him from the Arctic to Antarctica. As a Reuters correspondent, he has been posted to Brussels, London and Paris. He was awarded the 2011-2012 Knight Science Journalism Fellowship at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, with a focus on climate change.



**André Frenette** is Director-General of Communication at the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and has held that position since February 2012. Prior to his appointment at CIDA, he has held several positions within the Canadian Public Service, notably at the Department of Canadian Heritage where he served as Deputy Director-General of Communication and Director of International Relations.



**Gie Goris** heads *MO\**, a news magazine and website focusing on globalization and development. As a journalist, he often covers culture and religion in the context of conflict and human development, multiculturalism and globalization. Recent reporting missions have taken him to Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, and Pakistan.



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**Hani Shukrallah** is Editor-in-Chief of Ahram Online, the English-language news website of Al-Ahram, Egypt's foremost news organization. Before that, he was the co-founding Chief Editor of the Egyptian daily, *Al-Shorouk*, for which he wrote a weekly column. He is also the Executive Director of the Cairo-based Heikal Foundation for Arab Journalism and a founding member of the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights.



**Robert Skinner** is Senior Director for UN Relations and Special Initiatives at the UN Foundation. Previously, he spent nearly nine years as a Foreign Service Officer in the US State Department in Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as at the UN Mission to the UN in New York.



**Gunilla von Hall** is a foreign correspondent based in Geneva for the Swedish daily newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* since 1989. She covers the UN and international affairs. Since 1990 she has covered wars, conflicts and humanitarian disasters in more than 40 countries. Von Hall is also the President of the UN Correspondent's Association in Geneva.



Shyamola in her tea stall with her two daughters. "Until I became destitute, I had never imagined I could run a business, that I could do accounts, that I could be successful," she says. (Salman Saeed/UNDP Bangladesh)



# Bangladesh EMPOWERING WOMEN TO FIGHT POVERTY

BY MAHTAB HAIDER AND  
NADER RAHMAN

**Dhaka, Bangladesh**—In the past decade alone, Bangladesh has slashed its poverty rate by half, rapidly decreased family size by two-thirds, ensured that roughly 90 percent of its girl children are enrolled in schools and reduced child mortality by 60 percent—a development feat recognized by a United Nations award two years ago.

The story of Shyamola Begum, 43, is one personal example of this larger success in Bangladesh's development landscape.

Shyamola says she understands why her husband left her. Under the pressures of crippling poverty, with too many mouths to feed, he left their one-room shanty in the capital one morning and never came back, she explains.

"We came to this city looking for a better life but my husband Jamal struggled to find work and ended up pulling a cycle-rickshaw. When I got pregnant and gave birth to a daughter, he wasn't happy," Shyamola says.

Less than a year later, Shyamola got pregnant again, with another girl. Soon after, Jamal left for work one day and never came back.

"For several weeks in my pregnant state, I frantically searched for him in hospitals and morgues but the people from the slum knew he had left me," she says. "They told me to stop looking."

Shyamola shares her fate with tens of thousands of other women, whose husbands, driven by poverty and lack of employment opportunities, leave their homes every year.

But Shyamola's story has a comparatively happier ending, and she has managed to turn her life



Better healthcare. (Mahtab Haider/UNDP)

around thanks to a partnership between UNDP and the United Kingdom's Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction.

Three years ago, through this project, she was awarded an entrepreneur grant of Tk 2,500 (roughly US\$30) earmarked for the extremely poor. She matched this money with the \$30 she had managed to save working as household help and set up a small tea stall in the slum where she lives.

In just two months, Shyamola's

profits exceeded her own investment.

"Until I became destitute, I had never imagined I could run a business, that I could do accounts, that I could be successful," she says.

This particular success story is not the exception either. Over 55,000 families like Shyamola's have received such grants over the past five years, with encouraging results. In many places, these men and women have started making monthly contributions to their own local savings groups, so that there is a source of a larger loan in cases of emergency.

## INVESTING IN WOMEN

The Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction does more than hand out seed money. It also provides apprenticeships and educational stipends that equip young men and women to acquire vocational skills they can use to earn a living. According to a review by the UK's development agency, as a result of better opportunities for youth, school dropout rates in participating

**Investing in women yields dividends for the entire family, specifically for children's education and nutrition. UNDP's work in combating rural and urban poverty is proof of this.**

Stefan Priesner  
Country Director  
UNDP Bangladesh

slums have declined. Meanwhile, the project's work in helping these communities build infrastructure in their slums has seen 150,000 households gain improved access to sanitation and water.

The initiative has directly resulted in better healthcare, allowing the poor to dedicate more time to finding jobs or keeping the ones they already have.

"The Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction has played a strong role in bringing urban poverty into the Government's policy focus, while changing the lives of roughly three million urban poor for the better," says Stefan Priesner, Country Director at UNDP Bangladesh.

Much of this success has been possible through investments in women's education and the expansion of women's opportunities in the economic sphere, as seen in the joint UNDP and UK programme, say experts.

"Investing in women yields dividends for the entire family, specifically for children's education and nutrition," Priesner says. "UNDP's work in combating rural and urban poverty is proof of this."

When a different UNDP programme started providing cash-for-work schemes for destitute and abandoned women in rural Bangladesh, school enrolment rates for participants' children nearly doubled to more than 90 percent. As the country, once defined by rural poverty, wakes up to the fact that it now needs a strategy to address pockets of extreme poverty in its growing urban areas, UNDP's pioneering satellite mapping of 29 slums is aiding a targeted approach by the Government.

"In Bangladesh's current development trajectory, Shyamola's story could very well cease to be an exception," Priesner says. "With a national ethos that believes in making the most of challenging situations and few opportunities, we can expect many more socio-economic success stories from Bangladesh in the future." ■

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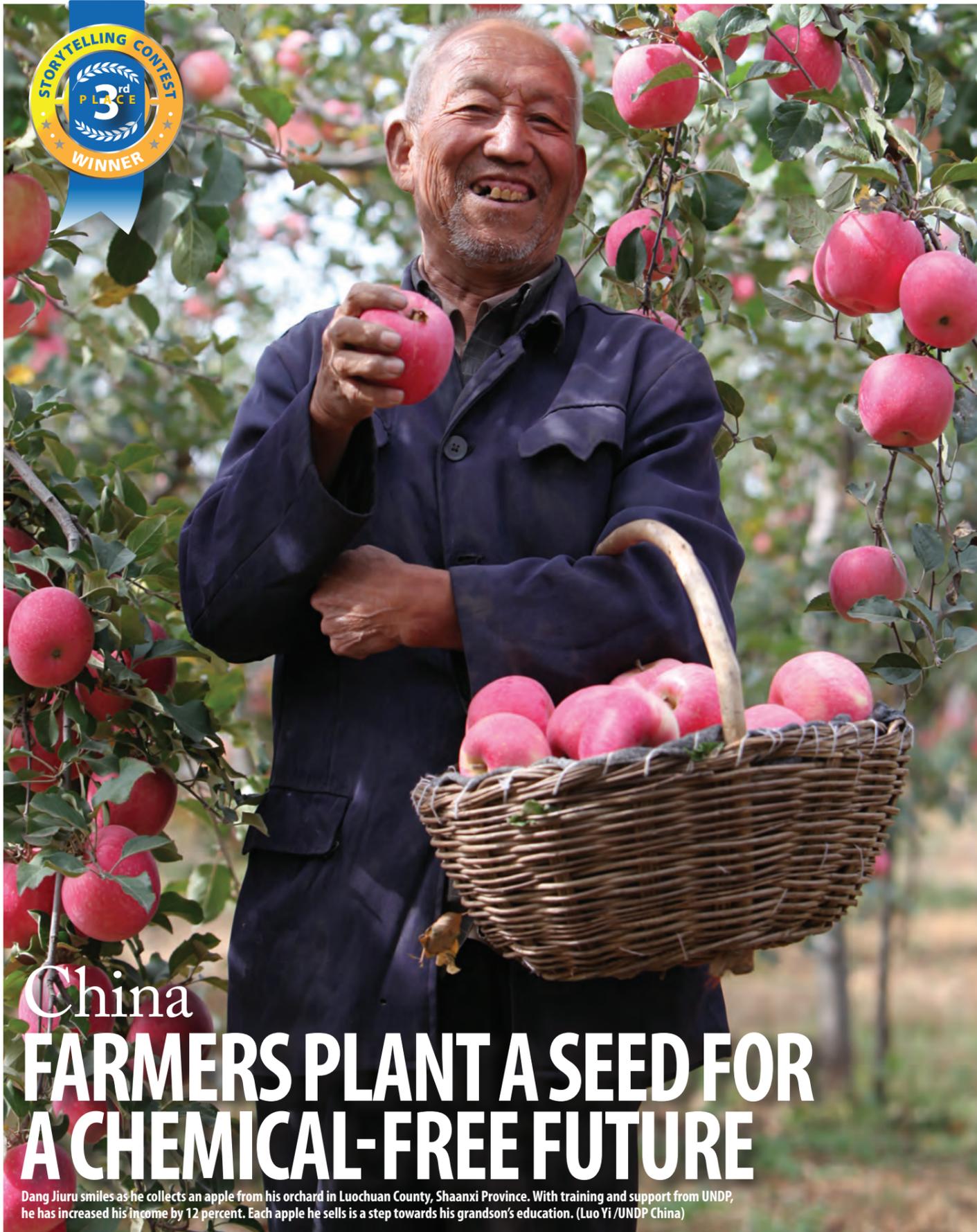


## RESULTS

- **Three million people**, especially women and children, have better living conditions and job opportunities
- **230,000 households** have improved access to footpaths, thanks to cash-for-work improvements
- **150,000 households** have improved access to sanitation and water
- **55,000 urban poor families** received cash transfers to start micro-businesses
- **Slums in 29 towns** have been mapped to enable the Government make informed decisions to combat poverty

Donor: United Kingdom





## RESULTS

- **100,000 farmers** in three provinces are being trained each year to adapt their farming techniques to international conventions and trading standards
- Production has reached **700,000 tonnes of apples per year** in Luochuan
- DDT emissions **cut by 180 metric tonnes** and DDT waste release **cut by 350 metric tonnes** by production plants in three provinces

Donors: China, GEF

### MONITORING PROGRESS

Over time, farmers have learnt to record the effectiveness of their new cultivation methods in personal logbooks, allowing communities to monitor the quality of their produce and take measures to avoid potential problems before they emerge. These efforts have been further enhanced by pest monitoring and forecasting centres, and a pesticide residue testing station set up under the project has provided regular guidance in compliance with international agricultural production standards.

In line with China's compliance with the Stockholm Convention, the project has helped minimize the amount of DDT released at a factory in Jiangsu Province and shut down production lines at two other factories in Hubei and Shandong. As a result, the project has realized annual reductions of 180 metric tonnes in DDT emissions and 350 metric tonnes of DDT-contaminated waste released during production.

Thanks to the reduced use of DDT on most of Luochuan's 300 square kilometres of apple orchards, as well as the farmers' newly-minted skills, annual apple production has reached 700,000 tonnes—equivalent to an average of 3.5 tonnes for each of the 200,000 people living in the county. Better quality apples now sell for 6 yuan (\$0.90) per kilogramme.

As for Dang, now a trainer himself, he is busy making preparations to join the growing number of farmers who are selling their apples to markets in Europe. And with a good harvest, offering his family the chance to earn 12 percent more per hectare than they did last year and invest in his grandson's education, who could blame him? One thing he is sure about though is that he won't be going back to chemicals anytime soon. ■



ADAM PITT is a Communications Assistant in UNDP China.



# China FARMERS PLANT A SEED FOR A CHEMICAL-FREE FUTURE

Dang Jiuru smiles as he collects an apple from his orchard in Luochuan County, Shaanxi Province. With training and support from UNDP, he has increased his income by 12 percent. Each apple he sells is a step towards his grandson's education. (Luo Yi/UNDP China)

BY ADAM PITT

**Shaanxi Province, China**—Seventy year-old Dang Jiuru dreamed of sending his grandson to university but until recently his lifelong ambition seemed destined to remain unfulfilled. His apple orchard in Luochuan County, Shaanxi Province, simply did not make enough money. But just two years since he took the bold step of abandoning toxic DDT-based pesticides, his grandson's university fund is now growing almost as fast as his apples.

Average altitudes of 1,100 metres and deep mineral-rich soil make conditions along this part of China's Loess Plateau perfect for growing nutritious fruit. Like most farmers he knew, however, Dang felt he had to rely on chemicals to protect his fruit from the leaf mites that thrive in the region's semi-arid monsoon climate.

"If you had asked me to stop using chemicals a few years ago, I would have just smiled and carried on spraying my trees," explains Dang. "I thought I couldn't afford to

**I thought I couldn't afford to stop using pesticides and that they were the only way to safeguard my income, but it turns out they were actually limiting it.**

Dang Jiuru, Farmer

stop using pesticides and that they were the only way to safeguard my income but it turns out they were actually limiting it."

With the ability to destroy entire mite colonies, DDT pesticides offered farmers a cheap, effective and quick solution to the problem. What Dang didn't know was that those same pesticides he thought were protecting his family's income were the very reason his apples had never sold for more than 2 yuan (US\$0.30) per kilogramme.

International treaties like the Stockholm Convention that aim to control the use of DDT, and strict health and safety standards in other countries, meant more profitable overseas markets were not an

option for Dang as long as he continued using DDT pesticides.

### TRAINING IN FARMING TECHNIQUES

Now, with the establishment of three demonstration projects and regular training provided by local and international experts, Dang is one of 100,000 farmers in three provinces being trained each year to adapt their farming techniques to international conventions and trading standards. This joint four-year project was initiated by UNDP and China's Ministry of Environmental Protection. With \$6 million funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the project is also helping farmers to remove their dependence on so-called 'persistent

organic pollutants' altogether. These pollutants include DDT and have been linked to serious health complications in people who come into contact with them.

Many of the new pest management techniques are simple, such as cultivating grass around the base of trees to provide a habitat for natural mite predators. Others involve more complex scientific technologies, with UNDP project experts providing scientific and biological guidance on the safe introduction of new predatory mite species into local ecosystems. And despite the larger investment in time and management that is required, interest has spread quickly and many farmers have already graduated and become trainers themselves in Luochuan County, where Dang has his farm.

Similar success in Hubei and Shandong provinces has seen thousands of citrus and cotton producers turn their backs on DDT-based pesticides in favour of healthier, more sustainable farming practices.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

# COMMUNITY CENTRES HELP PEOPLE LEARN TO LIVE AGAIN

Poor women are opening their own small business ventures—such as this fish fry stall—following UNDP training in small business management. (Junior Kannah/UNDP DRC)

BY JIN-HEE DIEU AND FLORENCE MARCHAL

**Mangina, North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo** — Conflict has raged among armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) since the late 1990s. The humanitarian and security situation there is very alarming, with ongoing attacks against civilians, acts of sexual violence and the recruitment and use of child soldiers. To support and meet the needs of individuals left vulnerable by these protracted conflicts, UNDP has established 12 multifunctional community centres in North and South Kivu provinces, two of the areas hardest hit by conflict.

\*The beneficiaries are all victims of sexual violence and asked not to be identified by their real names.

Maman Miriam,\* a 34-year-old widow, has benefited from her centre. In 2004, she was raped by three armed men who slashed her genitals with a knife, leaving her with physical and emotional scars. She felt completely abandoned and unable to care for her three children. When she entered her local community centre for the first time in 2010, the staff there provided psychosocial support to help her heal. Additionally, Maman Miriam was equipped with skills to earn a living and make her way in life, from learning to manage small amounts of money and read basic information to finding the ability to express her voice and leadership skills.

Today, two years later, Maman Miriam has left the displaced

persons' camp where she has lived since the attack and has moved to a neighbouring town. By combining her dressmaking skills along with selling local traditional beverages, she is able to pay her rent.

## SEEING CHANGE

"I see small changes all around me," she says with pride. "The children are healthy and clean, and they are going to school. I am saving up to buy my own piece of land."

She has gained new colleagues and friends as well, a real community that has given her new strength.

UNDP proposed this unusual response to violence in 2010, drawing on existing local initiatives already underway in Beni, a city in North Kivu, as a way of ensuring

the economic and social reintegration of vulnerable individuals. The centres are community-managed and provide a range of services, including mediation, literacy classes and information on women's leadership and work opportunities. The centres also offer instruction in dozens of trades, including cutting and sewing, basket weaving, raising livestock, baking and market gardening. Last, but not least, the centres are meeting places where citizens and local authorities and community leaders can discuss health and development plans, such as HIV protection and prevention campaigns.

The 12 UNDP-supported community centres that opened in the two Kivu provinces in the last two years have enabled more than 4,500 people to once again become part of local economic life. After attending education and information sessions, more than 2,000 of them also joined a community credit union, where they learn about saving and can take advantage of microloans, which offer a collective approach to achieving financial independence.

"I didn't know that poor women like us could save," says Sylvie Lubaki,\* a participant at the Uvira community centre in South Kivu. "Before, I just thought about the present but now I know that you can plan for the future with what you earn today."

The project can also take credit for the massive voter turnout in the 2011 presidential and legislative elections among women in the town of Burusi in North Kivu. Many of the new voters included women who had just learned to read and write through

## RESULTS

- **4,500 people** reintegrated into economic life
- **2,000 people** have joined the community credit union

**DONOR: UNDP**

classes offered in their local centre.

The special community centre approach is offering women and young people from isolated rural areas who have suffered decades of violence an opportunity to improve their ability to express themselves within their families and communities and to take charge of their own futures.

Congolese authorities have since become interested in the UNDP-supported community centres and have incorporated them into the country's national gender and development strategy. The centres will soon receive a kind of legal status that respects community management while allowing support from the Government.

The centres' current budget totals approximately US\$1.6 million, with funding primarily provided by UNDP.

"I felt worthless," Maman Miriam says. "I would cry, watching my children dying of hunger. I had no money and my health was destroyed."

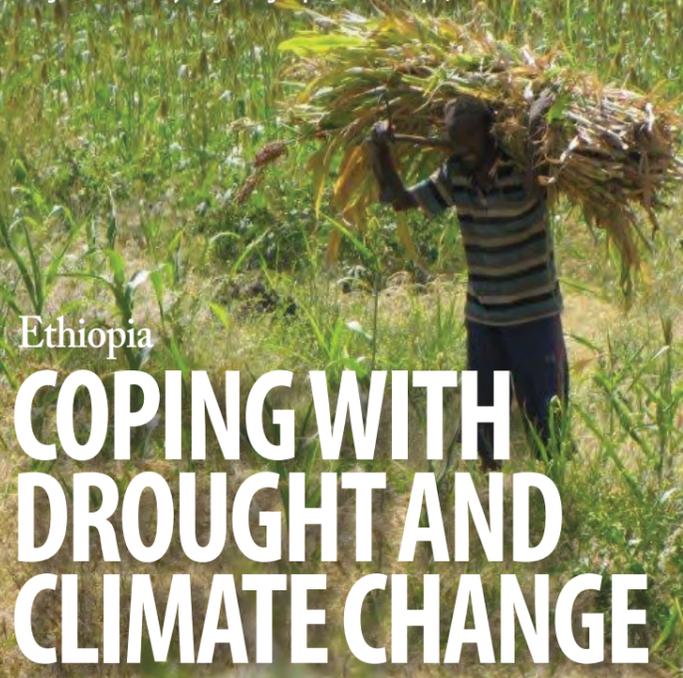
"Today, I am alive again. I am proud of myself and I know that I can be independent, make decisions and take action," she says with a big smile. ■

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One hundred thousand Ethiopians are benefiting from new, drought-resistant ways of growing crops. (UNDP Ethiopia)



Ethiopia

# COPING WITH DROUGHT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

BY WUBUA MEKONNEN

**Kalu, Ethiopia** — Throughout most of his 55 years, Mohammed Hassen and his family have faced much suffering during on-again, off-again droughts that have ravaged his district of Kalu, South Wollo Zone, in northeastern Ethiopia.

However, the father of nine, along with other farmers in his region, is now dreaming of a better future, the result of practical

drought-adaptation measures that are better preparing them for future droughts and the effects of climate change

In Hassen's case, it has meant providing him and his neighbours with high-yielding seeds that are drought resistant. Hassen's income has improved and his large family is now able to enjoy three meals a day; he even has extra cash to buy school supplies for the children and to start

saving for the future.

Hassen and his family are benefiting from a three-year UNDP and GEF pilot project covering four African countries—Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique and Zimbabwe—where the most recent drought has had disastrous consequences. UNDP is working with Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture, with financing of US\$995,000 from GEF.

A key component of the initiative includes ensuring that participating countries and communities can share their drought and climate change experiences with one another, with the ultimate hope of achieving some kind of sustainable and transformational change in the face of the ongoing and worsening effects of climate change.

## DROUGHT REFUGEES

Ethiopia absorbed about 275,000 drought refugees from the Horn of Africa in 2012 alone. The country's rural communities, however, are already fragile themselves, with livelihoods dependent on increasingly erratic rainfall patterns, magnifying Ethiopia's vulnerability to climate-related shocks and food shortages.

Saed Ibrahim, 41, knows all too well about food insecurity. His 400 square metre plot used to produce less than 50 kilogrammes of food

per year, forcing his family to be dependent for nine months of the year on government food relief.

While this arrangement helped keep his family from starving, Ibrahim felt frustrated and powerless.

"My family considered me a useless head of the household because of my inability to feed them," he says. "The time I asked my wife if we could have one more child she asked me 'what are you going to feed it?' and I felt ashamed. We didn't have peace in our family because of our deep-rooted poverty."

The UNDP and GEF drought adaptation project helped Ibrahim to join 200 fellow Ethiopian farmers on a learning tour in 2010 to the southern part of Ethiopia to gain insight into water harvesting techniques, vegetable production and beekeeping. He applied what he learned and is now able to earn about \$3,657 per year in addition to now owning \$10,000 worth of livestock. Ibrahim says he feels he is on his way to dealing with poverty, thanks to the advice and expertise he accessed through the project. Today, the family's vegetable plots are not only a source of income but help provide a much-needed nutritional balance to his family's diet.

"My daughter will not be forced into an early marriage due to a shortage of food, clothing and

## RESULTS

- **100,000 Ethiopians** are benefiting from the drought-adaptation project

**DONORS: Ethiopia, UNDP, GEF**

school materials," adds Aregash, Ibrahim's wife.

The project is also empowering communities to take charge of their crop-cycle planning with the introduction of easy-to-use early warning systems that can predict the rainy season.

Now in its third year, the drought-adaptation project in Ethiopia initially planned on reaching 41,000 inhabitants of the selected pilot areas in the Kalu District of northern Ethiopia. However, the number of people benefiting has risen to 100,000 as neighbouring communities become involved, eager to learn from these new practices that will allow farmers to plan ahead in the face of an increasingly unpredictable climate. ■

WUBUA MEKONNEN is a Programme Analyst in UNDP Ethiopia.





Siwan women taking literacy lessons on the *tabluter*, a customized computer set-up. (UNDP Egypt)

Egypt

## ADAPTING TECHNOLOGY TO LOCAL NEEDS

BY MARWA ELNOKRASHY AND KARIM EZZELDIN

**Siwa, Egypt**—Fatma Ibrahim, a poor mother of six, has been illiterate all her life. As a child her hard-working parents made simple handicrafts and sold them to make ends meet.

Like many girls growing up in Siwa, the largest oasis in Egypt's western desert, Ibrahim was deprived of an education due to her family's poverty and a community tradition biased against girls' education. These factors, in addition to the oasis' harsh living conditions, resulted in an illiteracy rate reaching 40 percent among women there, who make up half of Siwa's population of 23,000.

In 2008, UNDP's ICT Trust Fund

### RESULTS

- **8,800 women** have learned to read and write
- **5 more oasis communities** will benefit from the programme

**DONORS: Italian-Egyptian Debt for Development Swap Programme, Vodafone Foundation**

—established with the Egyptian Ministry of Communication and Information Technology—joined forces with the World Health Organization, Vodafone Foundation and the Siwa Community Development and Environment

Conservation Association to launch a US\$300,000 initiative aimed at both eradicating female illiteracy and helping women to find new or better employment.

In addition to teaching 8,800 women how to read and write, the initiative is providing women the kind of skills and materials needed to effectively take control of their lives and surroundings. For example, the programme put a special emphasis on computer skills, so in addition to providing training in business development and problem solving, it equipped the participants with their own personal computers.

As a result, women who enrolled in the programme learned to read and write, improved their

agricultural and handicraft production abilities and acquired online marketing skills. Siwa women now promote their products through a custom-made online store (<http://kenanaonline.com/siwa>).

Aware of prevailing social norms in the oasis, programme instructors brought the classes into women's homes. They transformed the traditional *tableya*—a low, round, dining table around which rural Egyptians sit cross-legged and eat—into a so-called *tabluter*. A *tabluter* is a customized, ergonomic computer embedded in the *tableya*; the computer hosts a single central processing unit that can run up to four independent computers. The newly tailored *tableya* is foldable, making it easy to carry around from home to home.

In 2012 alone, the initiative trained 120 women on the device, in addition to 10 more who were taught how to be literacy instructors, ensuring the ongoing life of the project. Fatma Ibrahim was among the first group of women to complete their literacy programme on a *tabluter*.

As a result, for the first time in her life, she has fulfilled her dream of being able to read the Holy Koran on her own; she is also able to help her children with their studies.

Ibrahim did not stop at reading and writing. She joined the programme's business development training course and eventually opened her own successful tailoring business. The business which not only helps her make money but has also created employment opportunities for her neighbours, who now work as tailors for her.

"When I first joined the literacy

**I found in computers life itself. Now I can read and write, I can earn my living and give my children a better life.**

Fatma Ibrahim, Business Owner

classes I was told that learning to work on computers can make our lives easier and help reduce inequality between men and women," Ibrahim says. "I found in computers life itself. Now I can read and write, I can earn my living and give my children a better life. And as a mother, I am a better role model for them to follow."

The project team is currently training non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around the Siwa governorate in using the *tabluter* to teach reading and writing. UNDP is also working on putting together a business model for these NGOs that will enable them to offer literacy classes for free. Going forward, UNDP and its partners are preparing to bring the entire initiative—including literacy classes, business training and *tabluter* use—to five more oases in Egypt.

Ibrahim now devotes her life to helping other women in her village overcome literacy.

"Who knows, maybe one day I might go beyond," she says. ■

MARWA ELNOKRASHY is Deputy Director for Partnerships in Egypt's ICT Trust Fund.

KARIM EZZELDIN is a Communications Analyst in UNDP Egypt.



A 3,000 cubic metres water tank is now serving more than 50,000 residents of Rafah in the occupied Palestinian territory. (UNDP PAPP)



occupied Palestinian territory

## PROVIDING SAFE WATER IN GAZA

BY DANIA DARWISH

**Rafah, occupied Palestinian territory**—Water is scarce in the occupied Palestinian territory and present supplies barely meet the needs of the Palestinian people. Over 13 percent of the population currently does not have access to running water and many of the existing water facilities are dilapidated. Water quality is very poor: only seven percent of the water supplied for domestic use meets World Health Organization standards.

Thanks to a UNDP initiative, however, people like Salem Mdadal and his family from Rafah in the

**We turn on the tap at any time and we get water. It may be too mundane to you but for us it is a great feat!**

Salem Mdadal, Rafah Resident

Gaza Strip, getting water is no longer a daily hardship.

Mdadal heads a family of 12 and lives with his brother in the same building, which houses 30 people.

The building's residents consume 5,000 litres of water every day; until recently, the city could only provide water via pipes for three to four hours, twice a week, and the flow of water was very weak. Mdadal frequently had to buy drinkable water from vendors roaming the streets in their water tank trucks. Each 1,000 litres cost NIS 20 (US\$ 5.25).

"We had a water crisis," Mdadal says. "I had to take extreme measures at home. We only flushed the toilet twice a day to conserve water. Imagine a family of 12 flushing the toilet twice a day only!"

"I also set a schedule for showers

### RESULTS

- **More than 50,000 residents** of Rafah have clean water

**DONOR: Japan**

and urged my children to get out of the shower if they were in for too long. This caused tensions in the family but what could we do," he adds.

The family's situation eased after UNDP built a 3,000 cubic metres water tank serving Rafah and provided booster pumps to supply water to Rafah's residents through a \$1 million project funded by the Government of Japan.

Along with the people living in Mdadal's building, 50 percent of the city's population of 102,000 people experienced a huge improvement in the water supply reaching their homes, after eight years of constant water shortages.

Power supply is also scarce in the Gaza Strip, only available eight to 10 hours a day.

Because of uncoordinated supply of water and electricity, Mdadal and his brothers had to schedule shifts every night to check water supply and to turn on booster pumps as soon as electricity and water were available at the same time. Things are different now.

"We celebrated the day when

the Rafah water tank became operational," Mdadal smiles. "Yesterday, water reached our roof tanks without the lifting pump. That was a record for us!"

"The Rafah water tank changed our lives," he continues. "I no longer need to compromise hygiene, live in a tense house, trade water shifts with my brothers, and worry about the exorbitantly high cost of water."

UNDP has completed over 200 water supply and sanitation projects in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Projects ranged from strengthening water and sanitation authorities to the construction of water supply and distribution networks, storage reservoirs and house connections.

The water tank in Rafah is part of an emergency water supply and rehabilitation programme that UNDP is implementing in the Northern Governorates of the Gaza Strip, at a total cost of \$5.4 million, provided by the Government of Japan.

"I wish this project was done eight years ago," when severe water shortages began in Gaza, Mdadal says. "It would have spared a lot of suffering. Now, we all save money and have access to the water we need to lead normal lives."

"We turn on the tap at any time and we get water. It may be too mundane to you but for us it is a great feat!" ■

DANIA DARWISH is a Communications Specialist in UNDP's Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People.



Women in El Fasher, North Darfur, march for "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence," an annual campaign beginning on the International Day to End Violence Against Women. (Albert González Farran/UN Photo)



Sudan

# LEGAL AID HELPS THE VULNERABLE IN DARFUR PROTECT THEIR RIGHTS

BY YOUSIF AHMED AND HANNA SCHMITT

**Garssila, Sudan**—Women and girls continue to suffer from widespread insecurity in the conflict-ridden region of Darfur in Sudan. For 13-year-old Aisha, her childhood ended when she was brutally raped by a man while on the way to the market in the small town of Garssila, in former West Darfur, now Central Darfur.

Unfortunately Aisha's case is not an isolated one. As law enforcement agencies in Darfur have insufficient resources and incentives to uphold and protect human rights, crisis-affected populations there continue to suffer from arbitrary violence and the deprivation of physical and legal safety. Women and girls face the daily threat of sexual violence. Given the lack of adequate and responsive law enforcement in the region, women in particular are reluctant to seek justice and file complaints against attackers.

Aisha's story shows why. Defying prevailing stereotypes and social taboos, Aisha's family took her case to the local court in town. The court, however, dismissed the rape case and convicted Aisha of adultery with a punishment of 100 lashes after delivery of her baby, who she became pregnant with as a result of the rape. Shocked by the court's ruling, the family turned to UNDP for support.

In September 2004, UNDP embarked on an ambitious rule of law programme in Darfur. With funding of over US\$15.3 million from Norway, Sweden, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom, the project is raising awareness of human rights and rule of law among these vulnerable

## RESULTS

- Eight legal aid centres established
- More than 3,500 cases since 2004
- More than 60 Darfuri lawyers provide free services

**DONORS: Norway, Sweden The Netherlands and the United Kingdom**

populations. It is also working with local leaders, organizations and authorities to help prevent and end ongoing violations of internationally-recognized human rights standards. The goal is to restore people's confidence in both informal and formal rule of law institutions and to gradually build a culture of rule of law and justice in the region.

Since the start of the programme, UNDP has successfully supported the establishment of eight legal aid centres in Darfur as well as a legal aid network that includes over 60 Darfuri lawyers. Through the legal aid centres, paralegal volunteers provide free legal advice and mediation services at the community level. In case further legal assistance is required, cases can be referred to lawyers from the legal aid network who, with UNDP support, provide free legal advice and representation to crisis-affected populations. UNDP rule of law officers on the ground in Darfur continuously monitor the referral of cases and the quality of the court

representation and provide technical advice and guidance as required.

### CONTINUING THE FIGHT

In the case of Aisha, UNDP legal aid lawyers immediately filed an appeal to the General Court in the nearby town of Zalingei, arguing that the age of the girl and the fact that she was raped should reverse the decision of the local Garssila Court or annul it at least. However, the General Court upheld the ruling of the local court. Determined to support the girl's fight for justice, the lawyers took the case to the West Darfur State's Appeal Court in the state capital of El Geneina, where the conviction was upheld but the sentence was reduced to 10 lashes. As the ruling was still incompatible with both national and international standards on children's rights, the legal aid lawyers addressed the Sudan High Court, the highest appeal court in the country. After lengthy deliberation the Court's justices issued a remarkable landmark verdict, overruling all previous verdicts and acquitting the girl of all charges.

In its reasoning the High Court stated that it did not agree with the Appeal Court's decision, which said that signs of maturity, including the pregnancy of the accused, constitute a ground for criminal responsibility, as opposed to the reality of her age, a decision that violates the Government of Sudan's Child Act of 2004. After establishing that the crucial factor in the decision is age and not perceived maturity, the High Court ruled that the defendant's allegation of rape

was sufficient to lift any sentence against her. Although the decision did not go as far as incriminating the perpetrator, it opened the door for a retrial should the victim's family wish to do so and gave hope to the many women and girls in Sudan who face rape and sexual violence on a daily basis.

Access to justice remains challenging for large parts of Darfur's population due to a deep mistrust among the local population of the very institutions that are tasked with ensuring their safety and security. Victims face continuing harassment and violence, a severe lack of resources and training for authorities, complex bureaucratic procedures, high costs and pervasive corruption.

Against this background, legal aid initiatives such as the one supported by UNDP remain a critical element of development support in the region. The demand for such legal aid services is growing.

"Over the years, we have witnessed a steady increase in requests

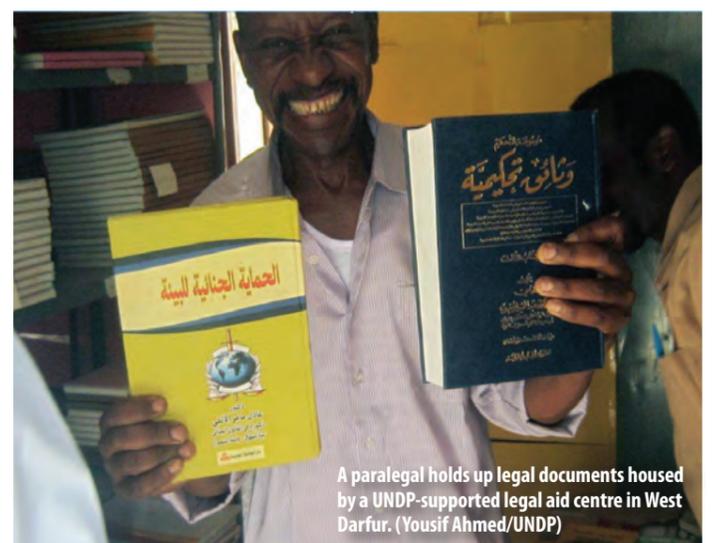
for legal support by community members," says Christopher Laker, the regional programme manager for the project.

Since 2007, the legal aid centres have provided legal advisory and mediation services in over 3,500 cases and legal aid lawyers have provided free legal assistance and representation in over 1,070 instances. In addition, over 15,000 community members have been exposed to human rights campaigns every year.

UNDP's work to provide legal aid in Darfur is not only helping children and victims like Aisha and her family to deal with these daunting challenges to basic justice and human rights; it is also working toward a future where any and all can expect swift, fair and impartial administration of justice. ■

YOUSIF AHMED is UNDP's Rule of Law Officer in West Darfur, Sudan.

HANNA SCHMITT is UNDP's Coordinator of the Partnerships, Communication and Strategic Advisory Unit in Sudan.



A paralegal holds up legal documents housed by a UNDP-supported legal aid centre in West Darfur. (Yousif Ahmed/UNDP)



Mongolia  
**MANAGING  
NATURAL  
RESOURCES  
BETTER**

Naranbek Ristan on his monthly patrol of community lands to check on wildlife. (Photos: Midori Paxton/UNDP Mongolia)

BY MIDORI PAXTON

**Akhbastau, Mongolia**—Naranbek Ristan slings his binoculars and notebook around his neck and mounts his horse with graceful ease. He is setting off on a monthly patrol of 6,000 hectares of community land to check on wildlife.

The country he will cover inspires many adjectives: harsh, magnificent, daunting. But for Ristan it brings to mind the most important word of all: home.

Ristan comes from the Kazakh ethnic group and he lives in the community of Akhbastau (literally “White Springs”) in the Altai Mountains of Mongolia’s extreme west. People here are herders and horsemen living in *gers* (yurts) that are decorated with colourful floor and wall carpets.

The Altai Mountains, which straddle China, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Russia, are a critical area for global conservation. They harbour a number of endangered species, such as the snow leopard and Argali sheep.

Life here is tough. The winters are long and brutal. Fierce gales combined with drought create a catastrophic phenomenon called the *dzud*. The 2009 *dzud* killed one in five domestic animals in the country. Wildlife numbers are declining as a result of overhunting and overfishing, and livestock pasture lands are deteriorating.

Overgrazing is one of the main causes of environmental degradation in the range, worsened further by the harsh effects of climate change on precious water and land resources. Many herders have stopped traditional rotational

grazing methods, which require moving seasonally in search of good pasture, leaving time for other pasture lands to recover.

Problems, though, invite solutions. Over the past six years, the Altai Sayan Project has worked with communities to manage natural resources such as pastures, wild animals and plants, while also improving and expanding livelihood opportunities for herders. The project was supported by UNDP, the GEF, the Government of The

*dzud*, and reduces pressure on pasture land.

The initiative instituted 20 environment units within the local government office to support community groups. Altai and Sayan conservation plans were developed through expert support from the project, which provided essential biodiversity information for land use and local development planning. The project also helped create “eco-clubs” to foster environmental education in 20 local primary

income is put into the community fund and the rest is divided among the households.

“We now have more options and different income sources,” Ristan says. “And we are better prepared for harsh winters. The *dzud* impact in this community was minimal last year, which I believe is owing to our organization.”

In large and sparsely populated countries, herders like Ristan must be the keepers of their resources if they are to maintain them for future generations. He has participated in several activities funded by the project, including training courses on wildlife monitoring.

“Before the training, wild animals looked rather similar,” Ristan says. “But now I can recognize individual animals and I enjoy observing the different behaviours of snow leopards.”

In 2011, the initiative culminated in important, nationwide changes.

As a result of the project advocacy efforts, Mongolia’s Environmental Protection Law was amended to include clear legal provision for community-based natural resource management. The Government designated 12

**We now have more options and different income sources. And we are better prepared for harsh winters.**

Naranbek Ristan, Herder

Netherlands and several other partners, who made a combined financial contribution of US\$11.2 million.

**TRAINING HERDERS IN NEW TRADES**

Through project support, more than 7,000 herders received training in new trades, including weaving and felt-making, dairy product processing and marketing, tourism and wildlife management. The project provided small loans and grants to community groups in the region to help develop tourism, grow vegetables for the first time, repair winter shelters and improve the quality of their milk and wool products. Diversification of livelihoods makes the herders more resilient to external shocks such as

schools, each equipped with a meeting room and library materials.

Once these groups of nomadic herders began organizing and managing their own natural resources, they started to support each other in additional ways. They came together to shear sheep, collectively rotated their livestock on pasture lands and worked together to make hay ahead of winter. Many communities even decided to decrease the number of livestock to reflect what the grasslands could support. They also established a hospitality *ger* for tourists who want to experience the nomadic life and the region’s breathtaking vistas. Horse trekking has also proven a success with tourists. Fifteen percent of tourism

The Kazakhs use golden eagles to hunt animals.



nationally-protected areas totalling 7.97 million hectares, an area three times as large as The Netherlands. The 64 officially registered community groups, which include 912 herder families, manage natural resources on land covering more than half a million hectares. After the project ended, the local government environmental units took over to support the community groups and their conservation efforts. The Government officially expanded the overall project approach to conservation and livelihoods nationwide through a June 2011 Ministerial decree.

Perhaps the most important achievement has been the change in herder and local officials’ mindsets about biodiversity conservation and resource management. ■

MIDORI PAXTON is a Regional Technical Adviser on Biodiversity and Ecosystems in the Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand.

**RESULTS**

- 7,000 herders trained in new trades
- 7.97 million hectares of land now protected

**DONORS: The Netherlands, GEF**





## RESULTS

- **3,000** trainees graduated with 70% now employed
- **Nine professional education centres** providing training in 25 high-demand careers

**DONORS:** Norway, Romania, European Union, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation

They are also viable as small enterprises, offering a double return by contributing to the income of the university.

By the end of 2011, as part of its support to Samegrelo, a region in western Georgia that hosts around 80,000 displaced people, UNDP had helped professional colleges in Poti and Zugdidi establish their own new curricula. About 1,500 students—half of them IDPs—can enrol in the courses each year. The colleges have opened furniture-making and tailoring workshops based on the model in Gori.

By 2012, upgraded training in 25 professions—mainly in higher-demand sectors like agriculture, food-processing and construction—was available in nine professional education centres across the country. Each of the educational courses was equipped with new training programmes, guidebooks for instructors and students, and special qualification courses for teachers.

Of the 3,000 people who have graduated so far, 70 percent have quickly found employment.

Levan Lokia, 22, lives in a small village with his parents and two younger brothers. Today, he is the only person in his family with a job, having started work on a school rehabilitation project after completing vocational training at the college in Poti.

“Vocational training changed my life for the better,” he says. “I feel more confident and know what to do. It’s not only about income. It’s about experience that improves my chances to become professional and competitive.”

People like Nino Narmania and Levan Lokia are making full use of their chances for a better future. An underlying belief that it is never too late to learn is helping thousands of people in Georgia to cultivate hope and skills to reshape their lives. ■

SOPHIE TCHITCHINADZE is a Communications Analyst in UNDP Georgia.



# Georgia VOCATIONAL TRAINING EQUIPS YOUTH FOR CAREERS

Nino Narmania is an internally displaced person who is taking advantage of a tailoring workshop offered through a UNDP-supported programme. (Photos: Daro Sulakauri/UNDP)

BY SOPHIE TCHITCHINADZE

**Poti, Georgia**—Last year, 19-year-old Nino Narmania learnt she needed computer skills to do her favourite job—sewing and making clothes. Intrigued and excited by the project, she enrolled in a college-level professional tailoring programme in Poti, a provincial town in western Georgia.

Together with 50 other young women, she was the first to reap the benefits of quality education supported by practical training in a well-equipped tailoring workshop.

“I am learning how to work in Photoshop and Corel, and how to use modern sewing machines,” Narmania says. “That is not always easy but our teachers are great. We have university professors to teach us computer technology and there are online classes from a professional college in Germany.”

Up-to-date curricula, modern equipment and qualified trainers make Phazisi College one of the most reputable educational institutions in the region. The tailoring programme accepts 50 students

**Two years ago, I would not imagine that it was possible to get an education like that in our city. This college is my future.**

Nino Narmania, Student Tailor

at a time and classes fill up eight months in advance.

Almost half of the college students are, like Narmania, from families displaced by conflict, known as internally displaced persons or IDPs. For them, professional training is one of the most direct ways to find employment and rebuild their lives disrupted by violence.

“Two years ago, I would not imagine that it was possible to get an education like that in our city. Now I feel confident that I can become a good professional and find a nice job. This college is my future,” Narmania says.

Georgia’s system of professional education has been questioned by advocates who argue that it needs to do much more to equip people for the labour market.

In 2006, with funds from the European Union, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, and the Governments of Norway and Romania, UNDP began collaborating with the Ministry of Education to reform Georgia’s system of professional education. As a result, participating colleges are now better aligned to the demands of the local labour market, there are uniform standards for qualifications, teachers have received critical retraining and vocational training sites have been refurbished.

After the outbreak of military conflict in 2008, UNDP began aiming these efforts at conflict-affected areas, where a professional education would help people return to self-reliance, especially those experiencing disruptions in education and careers due to displacement.

One of the first initiatives took place at Gori University in Shida

Kartli, the region most affected by war. Now recognized as one of the best-equipped professional education sites in the country, it offers a full range of vocational courses. On-the-job training includes mini-workshops for the production of agricultural products, such as traditional Georgian cheeses and canned fruit and vegetables, some of which sell in the largest supermarkets of Tbilisi, Georgia’s capital. The workshops allow students to begin work while learning the practical application of new skills.



A student participates in a training programme on furniture-making.

## EUROPE AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES



Kazakhstan

# CHAMPION FOR THE DISABLED

Participants in a ballroom dance competition in Kazakhstan. UNDP has worked closely with the Government to support the rights of people living with disabilities. (UNDP Kazakhstan)

BY ASSEL TLEOF

**Astana, Kazakhstan**—Since the age of five, when Ali Amanbayev was diagnosed with a serious spinal injury, life has been a constant struggle.

“As a schoolboy, I began using crutches and had to do my homework lying on my back,” he recalls. “As the years passed, I realized that life would only become more difficult. It is not easy being disabled in a society with limited social support systems.”

But attitudes and mindsets are slowly changing in Kazakhstan. Today, at 65, Amanbayev leads the Kazakhstani Union for the Organization of People with Disabilities. This summer, when he was appointed adviser to the Minister for Labour and Social Protection, he became the first person with a disability to hold this highly-ranked position in Kazakhstan.

This flagship appointment came as no surprise for Amanbayev, who has watched the rights of the disabled flourish recently in Kazakhstan.

Since 2008, UNDP has been working closely with the Ministry for Labour and Social Protection to support the rights of people living with disabilities. As a result, the country’s social protection system has been extended to include 500,000 disabled people. With UNDP support, a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also stepped up their lobbying efforts to appoint a person with a disability as an adviser to the Government. Amanbayev’s eventual appointment to the job

**As a schoolboy, I began using crutches and had to do my homework lying on my back. As the years passed, I realized that life would only become more difficult.**

Ali Amanbayev  
Advocate for the Disabled

marked a crucial signal of fundamental change.

UNDP, in partnership with the Government, also produced a National Human Development Report that, for the first time in any Central Asian country, advocated an end to exclusion and the promotion of equal rights for those with disabilities. The Report drew a lot of publicity and media attention.

Thanks in part to UNDP’s advocacy, Kazakhstan signed the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in 2008. More recently, UNDP has been working with the Government to promote national disability policies and the establishment of basic support services, such as opportunities to receive college degrees through distance learning, in addition to jobs training and rehabilitation services.

### IMPROVING SOCIAL SERVICES

With UNDP’s advice, Kazakhstan has amended key laws to improve social services for vulnerable groups, with special attention given to those with disabilities. As a result, US\$200 million of government funding has been allocated, allowing over 2,000 people with disabilities to receive special services. Amanbayev now has his own personal assistant who helps him in his wheelchair around the city and within his own home. These days, more than 7,000

## RESULTS

- **500,000 disabled** now benefiting from the social protection system
- **5,000 copies** of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities distributed

**DONORS: Kazakhstan**

disabled people in Kazakhstan receive these critical services.

“It’s made such a difference,” Amanbayev says of his assistant. “He’s the extra oomph to help me face the challenges of each day.”

These days, Amanbayev and other NGO leaders are busy lobbying the Ministry for Transport and Communication to revise standards for providing the disabled access to public spaces and public transportation. As a result, Amanbayev was invited to take

part in several hearings and meetings at the Ministry, where he convincingly pointed out the urgent need for change in a country where such standards lag far behind the international norm. The Ministry has reacted, promising to make all railway platforms and trains accessible for wheelchair users within the next two years.

“You can’t imagine how vital this is,” Amanbayev says.

Improving transport infrastructure is just one part of a wider national campaign to provide inclusive access to public spaces. This is bringing fundamental change to Kazakhstan, where more than 70 percent of public infrastructure is inaccessible to the disabled. With UNDP’s help, the Government is surveying the accessibility of public buildings and services and making cost estimates for necessary upgrades.

Since its inception, UNDP’s programme has been successful at raising public awareness and fostering a culture of inclusion for those with disabilities. In addition to a short film, photo exhibitions and national and international conferences, over 5,000 copies of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have been distributed to major public institutions, libraries and universities. ■

ASSEL TLEOF is a Communications Associate in UNDP Kazakhstan.



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## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Don Manuel and his family received resettlement help from UNDP after being forced to leave their home in northwestern Colombia. (UNDP Colombia)

Colombia

# MOVING FROM TRAGEDY TO DEVELOPMENT

BY AMPARO DÍAZ

**La Argentina, Colombia**—The 21st century was just beginning when Salomón Manuel Petro—a troubadour and farmer—and his family was forced to leave their home in northwestern Colombia. They took only what they could carry with them, along with their memories, shattered dreams and popular songs stuck in Petro's throat. That was when he and his family became internally displaced persons, or IDPs.

Petro, better known as "Don Manuel," was a peasant farmer, or campesino, from the region of Bajo Cauca Antioqueño. Like Colombia's other millions of IDPs, he left his lands to escape almost certain death due to ongoing armed conflict. He and his family fled to Medellín, Colombia's second largest city, where they met with countless other displaced people selling trinkets or begging at the traffic light in order to survive in the harsh cement jungle.

Don Manuel saw his life change dramatically. He left his home while his body was still recovering from the six machete blows he received from paramilitary groups in Caceres, a little village in the Bajo Cauca region, and he was being threatened with death if he did not leave within 15 days.

"I had to leave, I was lucky that I received only blows, others were killed," Don Manuel says. "And my family was unharmed. Others did not live to tell the story."

Don Manuel's case is not unique. Internal displacement as a result of ongoing armed conflict continues to occur in Colombia. Almost 3.9 million IDPs have been recorded since 1997. The search to resolve the situation of this huge population has become a priority for the Government and there are many needs for the displaced, including humanitarian aid, protection and opportunities for working towards more permanent and sustainable livelihoods.

Realistically speaking, many of Colombia's IDPs cannot hope to return to their homes in the near

## RESULTS

- 22,000 IDPs benefit from access to housing, basic services and economic development programmes
- Newly built community centres and schools

**DONORS:** Colombia, Sweden, United States

future. In 2012, UNDP partnered with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Government of Colombia to improve the quality of life for the country's IDPs, specifically focusing on moving beyond immediate humanitarian assistance to helping them to build a long-term future for themselves and their families. The programme receives financial support from Sweden, the United States and Colombia's Ministry of Labour, in addition to support from local governments.

### QUALITY OF LIFE

For example, the initiative is working to improve the overall quality of life for both the IDPs and the communities they are being located into. Funds are used to provide land, housing, basic services and local economic development programmes that help enrich the host communities along with their new neighbours. The programme also works to strengthen and support the government institutions tasked with protecting the rights of victims of armed conflict.

With the programme's support, Don Manuel and his family finally ended up in the city of La Argentina, where he and other IDPs arrived with the promise of receiving a plot of land to support their relocation.

"Paradise," is how Don Manuel describes his life today in La Argentina, located in southwestern Colombia. "This region is very poor in natural resources but it is peaceful and calm with regard to public order. I feel more at peace.

Here there is no war, like there was back home, where people could be killed for no reason and thrown in the river."

The initiative is already showing substantial results, currently benefiting 22,000 people in five communities. For example, two community centres have been built, nearly 100 boys and girls are benefitting from better schools—attended by students who are both IDPs and those who are not—and IDP settlements once deemed illegal by the Government have seen measurably improved primary health care systems.

Community organization is instrumental in the resettlement process. Don Manuel is a living example of this: today, he is a well-known leader in his municipality. He helped create the *Asociación de Desplazados en Proceso de Reubicación* (Association for Displaced People in the Process of Relocation) and is president of the Community Action Board.

### SMILES AND TEARS

But his smile is laced with tears that he tries to control. "Yes, yes I am thinking of staying...but I really miss my land, I can't deny it. But here we are, alive and with a future."

Indeed, more important than new buildings, community consultations and humanitarian hand-outs, is the resilience of the people themselves. That's why in 2013 the programme will reach seven additional communities, bringing much-needed opportunity to some 50,000 Colombians displaced by violence.

"The most important thing is to be persistent, to be willing to act, to recover what was lost during the time of violence, that is why we resisted so much hardship," Don Manuel explains, smiling with eyes that still reflect the scars of what he has seen and experienced. ■

AMPARO DIAZ is a Communications Specialist in UNDP Colombia. The UNDP team in the *Oriente Antioqueño* region contributed to the story.



## Top Soccer Players Shine in UNDP's 10th Annual Match Against Poverty

**Porto Alegre, Brazil, 20 December 2012**—Twelve-year-old soccer fan Clara hugs her idol, Brazilian superstar Neymar, and refuses to let go. As the players for the Match Against Poverty assemble before the start of the game, it takes a lot of gentle persuasion before Clara, overcome with excitement and emotion from being in direct contact with one of Brazil's most adored players, agrees to let go. Only then can officials blow the opening whistle of UNDP's 10th annual Match Against Poverty.

More than 50,000 soccer fans descended upon the new Arena Gremio stadium in Porto

Ban Ki-moon called global solidarity at its best.

"With the universal language of sport and with the goodwill that football brings, together with the support of Ronaldo and Zidane, I hope we will be able to maintain the awareness and the vigilance to fight against poverty," said Rebeca Grynspan, UN Under-Secretary-General and UNDP Associate Administrator, who represented the organization at the match. "There are still 1.2 billion out there who are waiting for an opportunity to become full members of society and live with dignity."

Proceeds from the game will be evenly split between two projects—one in Brazil and one in Cape Verde, western Africa, both aimed at reintegrating marginalized youth.

Funds raised from previous matches have so far contributed to anti-poverty projects in more than 27 developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Proceeds from last year's match in Hamburg were used to respond to a devastating drought in the Horn of Africa. The 2010 Match raised US\$540,000 for ongoing earthquake and flood recovery efforts in Haiti and Pakistan, respectively.

The annual match is televised globally. The Brazilian game was telecast by 18 broadcasters around the world, plus major news outlets such as CNN, ABC Sports, ITN and TVE aired news stories reaching an estimated audience of tens of millions of global viewers. Every year, the match is supported by soccer's governing bodies, the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA), and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). All the players and match officials donate their time.

For Clara and many others, the December 2012 Match will be a day to remember. Apart from seeing some of their greatest idols on the pitch, what they perhaps will also take home is the collective message from players, UNDP and all participants, that fighting against poverty is an everyday struggle and that every action helps.

"I hope that one day, with time, we won't be needed anymore," Zidane said. —By Abdel-Rahman Ghandour/UNDP NY



Zidane

Jefferson Bernardes/Review.com

Alegre to watch UNDP Goodwill Ambassadors Ronaldo and Zinedine Zidane's teams play against each other in a friendly and exciting match.

The game, sponsored by UNDP, ended with Ronaldo's star-studded team winning 3-2, with Zidane scoring one of the consolation goals.

"To be able to host this match and have my dear friend, Zidane, and all my other fellows graciously accept this invitation, in my home country Brazil, is marvelous," said Ronaldo. "This cause is really important to both of us. We are very glad with the progress made in Brazil and that we were able to sell all the tickets in just two weeks."

The annual UNDP Match Against Poverty began in 2003 at the initiative of star footballers Ronaldo and Zidane to raise awareness about the challenges and solutions around combating poverty, in what UN Secretary-General



# UNDP Across the Map

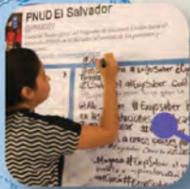
## CUBA:

To ensure food security, the Cuban Ministry of Agriculture, the European Union and UNDP have developed a joint project in which 13,200 farmers have been trained in business planning and animal feed production.



## EL SALVADOR:

UNDP promoted a law on access to information through an eight-hour "Tweethon" that generated 1,437 tweets.



## KOSOVO\*:

Bujar Kadriu—a 43-year-old married father of five who is partially sighted—has headed Kosovo's Association of the Blind for eight years. One of his proudest accomplishments was the June 2011 passage of a new law protecting the rights of the blind, who number around 3,000.



## PAKISTAN:

Jaan started a local women's community organization, one of more than 1,000 such organizations aided by UNDP's Refugee Affected and Hosting Areas programme. The initiative has helped rebuild an earthquake-ravaged road to Jaan's village, benefiting more than 12,000 residents.



## HONDURAS:

Conflict Mediation and Conciliation Units, promoted by UNDP, have dealt with a total of 5,546 disputes, of which 3,057 were mediated or successfully reconciled.



## NIGERIA:

The UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme has provided training in agricultural techniques to 32,500 women, allowing them to feed their families and sell produce in local markets.



## CAMEROON:

Two local women—trained in India to install solar panels—subsequently trained other women upon their return, who went on to set up 98 household solar systems in their villages. Children can now study at night and there is less risk of fire and asphyxiation from gasoline generators.



## SOUTH SUDAN:

With funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, UNDP has focused on strengthening the country's health care system. Last year alone, over 4,000 people received anti-retroviral medications and 85 percent successfully completed tuberculosis treatment.



## MYANMAR:

UNDP's Human Development Initiative has provided vocational training—snack-making, food preservation, knitting, bag and basket weaving—to 9,000 internally displaced people.

Photo credits (left to right): Mauricio Martínez/UNDP El Salvador; Paloma de Paz/UNDP Cuba; Bridget Ejegwa/UNDP Nigeria; Danijela Mitic/UNDP; UNDP Cameroon; Brian Sokol/UNDP South Sudan; UNDP Pakistan; UNDP

\*UN Security Council Resolution 1244, 1999

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

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