

A man with a friendly expression is shown from the chest up, wearing a red t-shirt and a light-colored apron. He is focused on working with a piece of dark brown leather, which appears to be a strap or part of a bag. He is wearing a black digital watch on his left wrist. The background is a workshop with wooden shelves holding various tools and equipment, including a yellow power tool and a blue container. The lighting is warm and natural, highlighting the man's face and the texture of the leather.

Transforming rural areas

“First, the project gave us training on how to manage our business. After that, I got a loan to expand the business. Now, I often get phone calls from people who see my tag in sandals and casual wear. I have attended six trade shows.”

Albert Prebi, shoemaker,
33 years old, 2 children

Today more people live in cities than ever before, but we still depend on rural areas for our food. In the developing world, up to 80 per cent of food is produced on small farms that are usually family-run. Yet it's also true that 70 per cent of the world's poorest people live in rural areas, where the lack of opportunity is forcing many young rural people to leave their homes in search of work in overcrowded cities or abroad.

Supporting rural development pays dividends, not just for rural people but for everyone. Investment in agriculture is five times more effective in reducing poverty than investment in any other sector. It helps sustain rural communities and transform them into places where a new generation of farmers, fishers and small business owners want to live. Rural development can also address the unequal access to resources that holds back women, who make up almost half of the developing world's farmers.

An IFAD-supported development project in Ghana helped farmer Sophia Hagan learn to process her cassava into higher-value forms and increase her income. It gave Enoch Kwame Affreh training in aquaculture. It helped Beatrice Arthur start a soap business that not only supports her, but the four employees she has been able to hire.

Rural development is about building vibrant, inclusive communities that are self-sustaining, with a range of self-starting options for decent employment for carpenters, welders, shoemakers, hairdressers and others, some of whose stories are told in these pictures.





“I harvest my own cassava, roast it as *gari* and package it for the market. I’m making a lot of money now.”

Sophia Hagan, producer and processor, 41 years old

“I used to sell roasted groundnuts... Now, I make 10 boxes of soap every week. I’m investing some of the money I make into expanding my business, the rest I spend on my children and four employees.”

Beatrice Arthur, soap maker,
36 years old, 4 children









“In the one year I’ve been working here, I have learnt how to properly measure, work with angles etc. I have really improved. Now I can manufacture agroprocessing machines. I have also received training on how to deal with clients and customers. I think the money can be better though.”

Samuel Hugah, welder,
30 years old

“I’ve received business management training and also attended a lot of trade shows... Unfortunately, mine is a capital-intensive business and the fishermen are refusing to give the fish to us on credit. We need cash to operate properly.”

Victoria Buer, fish processor,
54 years old, 8 children









“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.”

Christian Ocran, carpenter,
33 years old

“I started hairdressing eight years ago. A storm totally destroyed the kiosk I used to be in. With the help of the Rural Enterprises Programme and additional training, business started picking up again. I own two salons now and my younger sister manages the other one.”

Mary Nayiri, hairdresser,
32 years old, 17 apprentices





“I worked as a steel bender, carpenter, mason and occasionally meddled in farming. The project took me to Tarkwa for training in fishery. Now, I am an awarded and certified aquaculturist.”

Enoch Kwame Affreh,
aquaculturist, 35 years old

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