

## A success story in addressing women's time, energy and income poverty in Toliara

**T**he success story briefly described below is part of CRAAD-OI's support to rural women in communities most directly impacted by the intersecting ravages of climate change and extractivist mining projects in the district of Toliara II. The aim is to contribute to the economic empowerment and improved living conditions of rural women in the target areas, in partnership with WoMin through the *Dare To Trust* initiative.



Based on the results of case studies and dialogues with rural women in the target communities, CRAAD-OI has focused on the creation of alternative sources of income and energy for women through the development of sustainable economic activities with a high potential for added value and co-benefits that will also enable them to cope with the impacts of climate change, while contributing to the preservation of environmental health and resources at the local level, especially wood and forest resources that are about to be totally depleted. Indeed, recent studies indicate that if the rate of forest reduction remains at the current level, all of Madagascar's forests will be lost within 40 years in a context where 95% of households in Madagascar depend on woody biomass, primarily fuelwood for the poorest, poorer and middle income quintiles of the population (World Bank 2023).

According to the World Bank, “ in addition to impacting on forests, this reliance on traditional biomass for cooking imposes a critical toll on public health. Nearly 12,000 deaths per year in Madagascar are attributed to respiratory infections caused by inhalation of Household Air Pollution (HAP) from traditional cooking with biomass, of which over 10,000 are children under 5 years.

Some 20% of all deaths of children under 5 years are due to Acute Lower Respiratory Infections (ALRI), and 370,000 Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) are estimated to be lost each year due to HAP.»





**I**n its areas of intervention located in the Ranobe, Benetse and Ankililoaka communities of the Toliara II district, CRAAD-OI has responded to rural women's request for the construction of boreholes, which has significantly reduced the drudgery of collecting water – between 4 and 6 hour-walk every day -, while increasing their time budget for income-generating activities.



Their stable access to water has also enabled them to resume their agricultural subsistence production in the context of the prolonged drought and food shortages affecting their region.

Furthermore, in Ankililoaka, the borehole has also allowed for the establishment of a micro-distillery for the production of household ethanol fuel for cooking from the sugarcane that is widely available in this area, and offers several other possibilities in terms of transformation into products for disinfection and hygienic treatment (such as hydroalcoholic gel), and for the generation of electricity and compost from the by-products, just to name a few.



**T**he significant health and environmental co-benefits provided by this alternative economic activity are visible in the alleviation of the workload of women and girls for the collection of firewood, along with the reduced domestic pollution due to toxic fumes from firewood and/or charcoal, which are the direct cause of 37 deaths per day in Madagascar (WHO, 2021).

In addition, this new livelihood option is also expected to create jobs and complementary sources of income for women through activities linked to domestic ethanol production, such as sugarcane production; management of the micro-distillery for sugar cane juice extraction and distillation of domestic ethanol; distribution and sale of ethanol, by-products and stoves. Thus, the economic value of women's activities in this domestic ethanol value chain will increase their level of income and subsequently reduce their level of poverty.

Most importantly, this initiative has allowed for the development and implementation of alternative local development counterproposals to extractivist projects for and by women themselves, and the integration of marginalized rural women into the local production system through their active participation in the domestic ethanol value chain.



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