

In 2009 Concern Worldwide Tanzania and its local partners came to Kabindi Village in response to the villagers' requests to their district council for support in water provision. Concern Tanzania and partners have already improved two unprotected shallow wells where the villagers were fetching dirty water. This has enhanced the lives of around 600 people by reducing the distance and time to collect clean water from their homes, and improving the health and incidence of water-borne diseases like diarrhoea. The villagers believe that these wells will last over time because of the level of participation in and ownership of the project – core values in Concern Tanzania's work to improve the lives of some of the poorest people in Tanzania.

Biharamulo District is one of the least developed in Tanzania. It faces many problems due to its rural location far from the coast and major roads; it is in the north western side of the country close to the border of Rwanda. It receives irregular rainfall, and has limited access to the main cities. The topography of hills and valleys further reduces access to essential services, especially during rainy seasons. Whilst water coverage is generally high in the district, Concern Tanzania found in 2006 that only 10% of people had access to water within the recommended 400m walking distance from their homes, and 48% of improved water points were not functioning. On average one water point served 4,907 people.

Hadija Ali is 32 years old. Her mother Rehema Ramadhani is 48. They both live in Kabindi Village along with over 3,200 other villagers. **Until two years ago there were no safe sources of drinking water.** Villagers had dug their own wells. "The water was very dirty" says Rehema, "we drank the water and we got diarrhoea". A local organisation, with funding from an international donor, constructed two wells in the village. These provided the villagers with clean, safe drinking water but it was not enough to lessen the burden of long journeys for many women and children. "We went to the improved water sources to collect one bucket (20 litres) of drinking water per day by foot" says Hadija, "but they were very far from many of our homes as this village is very spread out. The journey took four hours in total, and then we still came to the other water source to collect water for washing and cooking". Hadija has six children and needs around 120 litres per day in addition to drinking water.

Despite the safe drinking sources Hadija and Rehema still experienced hardship in the village. Rehema is considered old for rural Tanzania and she struggles to walk long distances. "When I walked to the new source I was so tired that I couldn't do any other work that day except cook. I have lived on my own since my husband died and all the work is down to me. I have a small farm of one acre where I grow bananas, maize and beans. My daughters and my grandchildren had to help me to collect water and farm my land."



Hadija and Rehema at the shallow well constructed by Community-Based Health Care Council (CBHCC), Concern Tanzania's partner, in 2009. Environmental Conservation, Water supply and AIDS Control Organization (EWACO) supported the formulation of the

Hadija became ill with high blood pressure around two years ago and was unable to walk to the new water sources. "During my sickness my husband had to sell much of our farmland to raise money for medical care. I was in hospital for two months. My two elder children enjoyed being on their bicycles collecting water each day but they spent up to seven hours collecting water for drinking and washing, from two separate sources. They spent so much time helping to look after the other children and cooking that they performed badly at school. Now they are two full school years behind."

When Concern Tanzania improved two wells in the village life changed for Hadija and her family. "The main impact is the reduction of time spent collecting water" she says, "I can still only do some light work around the house but it's not a problem now because my children take only half an hour to collect all the day's water from the improved well. This means they have time for other activities". Notably, Hadija's two elder children are able to catch up with their studies. "They attend tuition for two hours after school. They learn maths and English. It costs 1,000 TSH (€ 0.50 / \$0.75) per child per month. Before they didn't have time; they could not catch up with their primary schooling without this improved water source. I hope that now they will be able to go to secondary school."

Life for Rehema improved too. "Now I am comfortable. I can collect water and use the rest of my time to work on my small farm and cook for myself and my grandchildren. We are all much happier."

"Constructing the well is the easy part", says Moses Shemdoe, a Concern Tanzania water engineer working in Biharamulo District, "making them last in the community is the tricky bit". What is different about the way Concern Tanzania and partners work with communities like Hadija and Rehema's to sustain the water points over time?

Participation and ownership, say the mother and daughter. "We helped to build this well and so we own it. We helped to collect wood and stone from the hills behind the village for the construction work. We understood what we were going to get from this and so we wanted to participate." Community resource mobilisation and labour participation are prerequisites for all of Concern Tanzania's water infrastructure projects, and communities always participate in the design and implementation of the projects. Concern Tanzania and partners believe that by encouraging local ownership of the infrastructure and creating and forming water user groups from the community to manage and maintain the structures that they will last over time. The water user groups comprise: a chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer, a maintenance person, a care taker and a community mobiliser who encourages the community to take care of the well and helps to promote good hygiene behaviours of the villagers.

"The users (roughly 50 households) and the water user group protect and maintain the well" says Rehema, "and now we contribute money for the water. We agreed to contribute 500 TSH (€ 0.26 / \$0.38) per household per quarter. We understand why we are contributing and the price is fixed so that everyone can afford it. If the well breaks or there is any other maintenance issue then we can repair it ourselves with our own money."

Out of 300 users, seven do not pay for the water because they have been identified as the most vulnerable users – they are elderly people. The treasurer of the water user group is opening an account and the community have agreed to pay a small amount per bucket in the future. With the money saved they hope to build more wells.