

# INITIATIVE MILLENNIUM VILLAGES

## CONCEPT



### Background and objectives

The United Nations started the current millennium with the confidence that great progress could be made in the global fight against poverty and hunger by 2015. Early on, Welthungerhilfe realised that the achievement of Millennium Development Goals would require not only a financial commitment but also convincing and target group-appropriate concepts. Therefore in 2006 the organisation started the Millennium Villages initiative to show that significant and measurable progress can be made in the fight against poverty and hunger with the help of rural development instruments and in particular “helping people to help themselves” programmes with very little funding.

An interim evaluation in 2009 showed that the initiative not only improves the living standards of the local population but also strengthens their position as stakeholders in their own development. Authentic and transparent reports, along with traceable measurements of progress, have increased the recognition of the effects of Welthungerhilfe's development work among donors, supporters and the public.

The primary aim of the continuation of the initiative from 2011 to 2015 is to utilise the Millennium Villages - in addition to an instrument for the regional and local realisation of Millennium Development Goals – with respect to the entire work carried out by Welthungerhilfe. Specifically: The initiative demonstrates by way of example, and across continents, how an increasing number of people in poor regions have an opportunity to exercise their right to a self-determined life in dignity and justice, free of hunger and poverty. It also offers an opportunity to better utilise the experiences gained as a result of the project work and hence communicate and solicit support for the successes of development co-operation activities that are oriented to the rights and needs of the people, both in the project regions as well as the German and international public.

To ensure its success, the initiative has defined concrete targets for the second phase:

- The initiative will make the objectives and positive outcomes and impacts of the development work undertaken in the rural areas for the fight against poverty and hunger more tangible for the local population and also for donors and the public.
- It contributes towards enabling local people to voice their needs, organise themselves, identify development options, demand their rights and hence improve their living conditions for the long term, by themselves.
- The global initiative offers the ideal medium for the development of South-South and South-North networks along with mutual learning, and thus contributes to the development of an informed civil society.
- Donors and experts experience the initiative as an impressive and outcome-orientated project in development co-operation. This is accomplished by accompanying the local

population over a long time period, the systematic compilation of development progress and reporting that is appropriate to the target group.

- Mutual learning, partial self-financing and systematic monitoring offer Welthungerhilfe and its partners the ideal framework conditions for innovation and the updating of good practices in development co-operation.

Similar to all Welthungerhilfe projects, the initiative's basic financing is secured through public and private donors. Innovative building blocks, such as the development of monitoring that is adequate for the situation, and the preparation of project progress for the media, global learning and the wider public, are mainly financed with Welthungerhilfe own funds.

## Significance for the entire organisation

A central element of the Welthungerhilfe strategy for 2012-2014 is the vision that all people should have an opportunity to exercise their right to a self-determined life in dignity and justice, free from hunger and poverty. It is a vision that Welthungerhilfe has been advocating with its projects for sustainable food security for almost fifty years - and it continues to be the key idea behind the Millennium Villages. The Millennium Villages initiative aims to communicate the contents of this vision by way of examples.

The Millennium Villages - often several villages or a region - demonstrate how rural areas in Africa, Asia and Latin America, which are still home to the majority of the hungry, successfully take advantage of the new development opportunities that are provided to them. The principle of "Helping people to help themselves" takes centre stage in this regard: Village communities identify their problems, prepare solutions with the support of Welthungerhilfe and partner organisations, and implement measures on their own. Together with our partner organisations and employees, the inhabitants decide which of the Millennium Development Goals they wish to achieve by 2015. They then adjust the contents of the Millennium Development Goals to their local situation.

Progress is not confined to the Millennium Villages; rather, change processes radiate into the entire region: i.e. surrounding regions also benefit from improved market structures and innovations in agricultural production.

In addition, the situation is assessed once a year in line with MDG monitoring, and planned measures may be adjusted to the current situation where necessary.

Each village / each region generally makes a contribution to Millennium Development Goal 1, which aims to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. This involved the development of a series of indicators, and hence the initial building blocks and experience values for the relevant indicators of sustainable food security, which can be transferred to other Welthungerhilfe programmes.

Analogously to the decision made in mid-2012, namely to add a programme-related subline in the local language to the existing German Welthungerhilfe figurative mark outside of Germany, such a translation aid should also be considered for the term Millennium Villages. This will most probably involve the translation of tag lines into the relevant languages, which supplement the word and thus facilitate local communication.

## The Millennium Villages and local civil society

The work performed by Welthungerhilfe together with the population in the Millennium Villages supports processes of awareness-building and contributes to the strengthening of the population in the long term. The long-term goal is an informed civil society that identifies and discusses development obstacles and options, and assumes responsibility for the development processes in their village or region: On a methodological level, each millennium village has a representative group of women and men who are engaged in participatory planning and management processes. The results of Welthungerhilfe monitoring are jointly discussed and implemented by project staff and the village representatives. Progress in the Millennium Villages differs greatly and will depend on the respective level of civil society structure in the countries, and also on the local context. For example, there have been good experiences with the representatives of a millennium village in India, who contributed their knowledge and experience to the implementation of participatory workshops in a millennium village in Nepal; in Uganda, the first networks of farmers' groups are being formed in the Millennium Villages region. In addition, Welthungerhilfe also promotes a South-South exchange, for example through mutual field visits, seminars etc. Informed civil society representatives who have been trained in the methods are therefore able to constructively participate in the preparation of national development plans and represent the interest of poor segments of the populations, such as those in the Millennium Villages, with confidence.

## Relevance of the Millennium Villages initiative to the public

The Millennium Villages initiative offers opportunities for targeted marketing: as illustrative and emotionally appealing examples of impressive and effective development co-operation, which enables local people to voice their needs, organise themselves, identify development options, demand their rights and hence improve their living conditions on their own for the long term. This approach is relevant to the communication with donors, because it contains a clear exit strategy and positions our organisation as innovative and self-learning.

The initiative is particularly suited for communication activities that allow for or require an intensive or personal dialogue. This applies to the following target groups in particular: Large donors, circles of friends, companies and experts. But the initiative also offers good potential for the work that is done with schools.

Fund-raising activities are focused on converting donors, who are traditionally motivated with project-based donations, to earmarked donations by offering a variety of thematic funds, including the Millennium Villages. Based on the donor's requested design, a range of thematic earmarking options will be offered across thematic funds. The established monitoring process for the Millennium Villages offers the potential for especially in-depth and process-oriented reporting for these target groups. At the same time, it is the intention to establish a uniform control and reporting system for all topic baskets.

Another benefit offered by the initiative is the enormous amount of illustrative and authentic stories and pictures. In line with the overall strategy and the strategic project "Tangibility", the Millennium Villages therefore represent an attractive source of "moving stories" for communication purposes. Verifiable impacts, the global approach and the option of trying and learning from innovative measures, also for other projects, are supporting arguments for the

quality of our work. Project travel by large donors, companies and journalists create an immediate sense of tangibility and establish an emotional connection to the organisation. This is also done with the work performed by staff, including staff from the Millennium Villages, at events, discussions with large donors and companies, and as part of presentations given in Germany. "Moving stories" in a prepared form are also used in the relevant communication channels - especially for mailings, the donor magazine and at events - but with the primary goal of generating free donations.

## Time horizon after 2015 and organisational structure

The second phase of the initiative has been set for a five-year period from 2011 to 2015. In view of the objective of achieving positive outcomes and impacts with respect to the development work performed in the rural areas for the fight against poverty and hunger, it would also be preferable if the experiences and progress in strengthening civil society can be used beyond this time period in order to enable the local population to improve their living conditions for the long term. The initiative offers numerous development opportunities that will continue to apply after the official end of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015, and which should be used. In the long term, it is conceivable that positive experiences from the initiative will be fully integrated into Welthungerhilfe's programme work.

The initiative is accompanied by a steering committee that spans across departments; it monitors the development of the initiative on a semi-annual basis, makes conceptual adjustments as required, and also recommends concrete measures particularly in the area of Marketing and Public Relations.

In line with integrated agenda planning, the areas Policy, Marketing and Media ensure that the corresponding measures and budget approaches are considered in the economic plan for the following year with respect to the thematic funds in general and the Millennium Villages in particular. The Marketing area is proactive in creating enthusiasm among project-oriented donors for an earmarked commitment to existing topic baskets, including the Millennium Villages, by offering the corresponding advisory services.

The purpose of the Millennium Villages topic basket is to finance the different instruments and measures as part of the initiative. The purpose of this "fund" is to ensure the flexible use of earmarked funds, and that funds may be distributed in accordance with need and also for innovative measures. The steering committee will decide on the allocation of funds on a semi-annual basis in accordance with the attached description.

## IMPRINT

### Issued by:

Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V.  
Friedrich-Ebert-Straße 1  
D-53173 Bonn

E-Mail: [info@welthungerhilfe.de](mailto:info@welthungerhilfe.de)  
<http://www.welthungerhilfe.de/millenniumsdoerfer.html>

### Editorial responsibility:

Bärbel Mosebach, KnowledgeXchange Unit (FG 10)

### Authors:

Mark Ankerstein, Julia Escher, Bärbel Mosebach, Theo Riedke, Dr. Rafaël Schneider,  
Dr. Iris Schöninger, Jeannette Weller

### Editors:

Bärbel Mosebach  
Jeannette Weller

### Status:

Bonn, Oktober 2012

### To print out:

Intranet > Knowledge > Folder > Programmes and Projects: Cross-Cutting issues >  
Sectoral Programmes > Millennium Villages > Konzept