

1 Village-Net: bringing together Millennium Villages throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

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Abstract:

The Millennium Villages Project (MVP), based at The Earth Institute at Columbia University, is a bottom-up, community led approach to show how villages in developing countries can get out of the poverty trap that afflicts more than a billion people worldwide. With well-targeted, practical inputs can help the community invest in a path leading to self-sustaining development. There are 80 Millennium Villages clustered in 10 countries throughout sub-Saharan Africa. MVP is an important development process for empowering communities to invest in a package of integrated interventions aiming to increase food production, improve access to safe water, health care, education and infrastructure. The process benefits from synergies of the integrated approach and relies on community leadership as empowered by proven technological inputs. MVP is committed to a science-based approach to assess and monitor the progress of the communities towards clear objectives; the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to do so with mechanisms that are scalable and sustainable. This approach offers much more than simply collecting and analyzing data since the mechanism used for recording progress would provide a bridge over the divide which separates the haves and the have-nots (by facilitating the sharing of solutions from one community to another bidirectionally). By so doing, it allows people to enhance their own futures in a sustainable manner. Solutions found in one community are transferable to similar communities in other MVP villages. To achieve this goal, the MVP requires an information and communication system which can provide both necessary infrastructure for monitoring and evaluation, and tools for communicating among the villages, cities and countries. This system is called the Millennium Global Village-Net (MGV-Net). It takes advantage of the latest in open source software (OpenMRS), databases (MySQL), interface terminology, a centralized concept dictionary, and uses appropriate technology locally for data entry