

# The Millennium Villages Project

The Next Five Years: 2011-2015





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UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visiting the Millennium Village of Mwandama (Malawi), May 2010

“Millennium Villages throughout Africa are showcasing... how effective an integrated strategy for health care, education, agriculture, and small business can be. We are seeing how to make the most of new technologies. And we are seeing how empowering women can empower whole societies... If other countries do all that you are doing, we can—and we will—achieve the Millennium Development Goals.”

– Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General,  
Address to the Parliament of the Republic of Malawi,  
May 29, 2010

## Introduction to the Millennium Villages Project

The Millennium Villages Project (MVP) was launched in 2005/06 in order to create a pathway to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the poorest regions of rural Africa. Until the launch of the MVP, the Millennium Development Goals were a hope for poor villages, but a hope without a roadmap. The MVP offers a roadmap to 2015. Indeed, with four years remaining to achieve the Goals, the Millennium Villages Project is unique as Africa's largest systematic and scientific effort to achieve the MDGs.

Reaching nearly 500,000 people in rural villages across 10 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the Millennium Villages Project is supported by a dynamic global network of partners, with the core science and policy leadership of the Earth Institute, Columbia University, and the operational leadership of Millennium Promise.<sup>1</sup>

There are three over-arching goals of the MVP. The first, and most basic, is to support Millennium Village (MV) communities and local governments to achieve the MDGs by 2015. The MDGs commit the world to clear and quantitative targets. The goal of the Millennium Villages Project is to meet all of the MDGs in all of the sites by the year 2015.

The thrilling news is that the communities in the Millennium Villages are on track to achieve the MDGs by 2015. We are seeing dramatic gains in the fight against poverty, hunger, and disease. Incomes are rising, hunger is falling, and health is improving. Not surprisingly, the pace of progress varies from site to site. The Millennium Village locations were selected to provide a broad range of ecologies, cultures, and agricultural systems. While the integrated, cross-sector approach provides a general framework for each community's strategy, distinctive challenges posed by the local climate, natural terrain, disease burden, remoteness, and lack of national infrastructure influence the implementation of the interventions and the pace of progress. Even so, all sites are making major advances.

The second goal is to create a system for success. "System" is a big word in this context. It means not only a clearly defined pathway to achieve the MDGs, but also a "toolkit" that can be transferred from the MVs to the rest of rural Africa. These tools include organizational strategies (for example, a detailed system for deploying community health workers), specially designed software, and a real-time information system that documents progress and detects problems in real time. This entire set of tools must be well documented and available to other communities and governments that wish to adopt the MVP system.

The third goal is to work with governments around Africa to scale up MVP interventions and achievements, so that the best lessons of the MVP are put quickly into practice around the continent. Just as the MVP team is working to achieve success in the core MVP sites, it is simultaneously working in many places in Africa beyond the village sites to scale up MVP-type systems. Throughout Africa the Millennium Villages Project is having a very important impact on policy design and implementation.

The MVP is a complex project that operates at the scale of communities of 5,000 to 70,000 people.<sup>1</sup> Unlike many other development initiatives, the MVP is not testing or introducing a single new intervention. In a Millennium Village site, dozens of science-based interventions are pursued simultaneously. The interventions range across five key sectors: agriculture, health, education, infrastructure (including water and sanitation), and business development. The Project leverages and develops systems and technologies for achieving the strongest combined results of these interventions. Gender equality and environmental sustainability run throughout all Project activities.

<sup>1</sup> The Millennium Villages at the core of the Project are not individual villages but rather clusters of several contiguous villages. The largest cluster (in Tiby, Mali) is home to about 70,000 people. Project interventions are implemented across all villages with the aim to serve the entire community throughout the cluster.



Jeffrey Sachs in the Millennium Village of Ruhiira (Uganda), July 2011

**The thrilling news is that the communities in the Millennium Villages are on track to achieve the MDGs by 2015.**

## Map of the Millennium Villages, 2006-2010



### WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA

1. Potou (Senegal)
2. Tiby (Mali)
3. Toya (Mali)
4. Bonsaaso (Ghana)
5. Pampaïda (Nigeria)
6. Ikaram (Nigeria)

### EAST & SOUTHERN AFRICA

7. Koraro (Ethiopia)
8. Dertu (Kenya)
9. Sauri (Kenya)
10. Ruhiira (Uganda)
11. Mayange (Rwanda)
12. Mbola (Tanzania)
13. Gumulira (Malawi)
14. Mwandama (Malawi)

There is no rigid blueprint for the set of interventions or implementation systems at any site. Both the intervention package and the implementation systems must be designed together with local communities in order to address the specific priorities set by each community. Much of the Project involves local learning about how to implement a package of interventions. The MVP is strongly characterized by the process of “learning by doing” that is attuned to the realities of each community.

The Project’s urgency in the race to end extreme poverty is guided by the tight deadline to achieve the MDGs by 2015. The Project therefore moves quickly, aiming to shorten the lag time from demonstrated successes in the MVs to their scale up throughout Africa. In this sense, progress in the MV sites and scale up in Africa are proceeding in tandem.

While the Project is moving quickly, the MVP is of course committed to rigor in the process. Everything that is occurring in the Millennium Villages is carefully documented. We are thereby learning how systems (in health, agriculture, schools, etc.) operate in practice, and about the core skills and training needed for success. In the process, the MVP is creating a stream of procedures, handbooks, computer programs, data sets, and scientific publications. These tools support the rapid uptake of MVP systems, for example at national scale in Nigeria, in the pastoralist areas in East Africa, and in a growing number of other countries that are joining the Millennium Villages Project.

The first five-year phase, from mid-2006 to mid-2011, introduced the basic systems in each of the MVs. The first phase achieved rapid progress including reduction of hunger and malaria prevalence alongside increased access to safer drinking water, basic healthcare, and primary education. The next five-year phase, from mid-2011 to the end of 2015, will build on the achievements of the first phase in order to ensure MDG success by 2015.

During the first five years, the Project successfully made progress in all five key sectors. For example, key infrastructure was put in place, including roads, safer drinking water systems, improved sanitation, wireless connectivity, and off-grid power. Schools and classrooms were built, teachers trained, clinics established, community-health workers mobilized, staple crop production dramatically increased, and much more.

In its first five years, the Project showed the basic concept of an integrated approach to community-led development to be realistic. Contrary to the initial skeptics, the MVs successfully implemented development activities across a diverse and complex set of challenges. The Millennium Village teams, led by dedicated and skilled African professionals, deserve enormous praise and recognition for their success. As a result of the MVP achievements, integrated rural development is again front and center of rural development strategies.

Still, there is much work to do in phase two. The various systems put in place in the first phase, while now functional in all of the MVs, need fine-tuning and upgrading. The progress has been tremendous in just five years, but more is needed to achieve the MDGs.

Next, we need to sustain the rapid progress and ensure the Project’s sustainability beyond 2015. Thus, the next phase (2011-2015) involves a gradual reduction of annual donor flows from the MVP to the local communities, with the financing to be increased by host governments, other partners such as NGOs, and the communities themselves.

## The Project's sense of urgency in the race to end extreme poverty is driven by the tight deadline to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

The third priority is to raise community incomes through an intensified focus on business development. In the first phase, communities took the first step out of poverty by adopting improved seed varieties, better soil management, and enhanced farming practices. Staple crop yields have increased significantly and hunger has been reduced. Yet this progress has not been enough to banish poverty. Further progress in income generation requires further investment in agriculture, for example in the form of irrigation to enable multi-cropping and cultivation of high-value crops.

The fourth main goal through 2015 is to ensure that all of the key lessons from the MVP are carefully documented in scientific publications and in an open-source, online tool kit. The Project aims not only to prove that the MDGs can be accomplished, but also to support the scaling up of the MVP systems throughout Africa. The key tools for success must be easily replicable, adaptable, and scalable.

These four main goals of phase two—systems improvement; success by 2015 and sustainability thereafter; business development; and broad replicability—are built into the Project framework that is described in this publication. The Project has taken care to support these objectives in very operational ways. For example, each sector team (agriculture, health, education, infrastructure, and business development) is carefully documenting the systems being put in place so that they can more easily be replicated and scaled. Each sector is operating within a five-year budget envelope that builds in the objective of long-term sustainability. Major efforts are being undertaken to establish and support community-based farmer cooperatives as the linchpin of new business development. Many scale-up initiatives around Africa are being pursued alongside the work of the MVP. Finally, the Project is making every effort to ensure the timely and accurate reporting of the

results in the MVs, in order to ensure scientific rigor and dialogue with development practitioners, specialists, and partners around the world.

As part of phase two, the Project is moving operational responsibility from New York-based teams at the Earth Institute and Millennium Promise to the two regional centers of the Project: the MDG Centre for East & Southern Africa in Nairobi, Kenya, and the MDG Centre for West & Central Africa in Bamako, Mali. Increasingly, the MDG Centers will house the scientific and operational teams with direct oversight of the Project. Scientists and managers in New York will of course actively support the two MDG Centers in their front-line leadership.

The founding partners of the MVP, the Earth Institute and Millennium Promise, are also strengthening their partnership in order to better support the leadership in Bamako, Nairobi, and the Millennium Villages. The Earth Institute is responsible for the scientific and strategic leadership of the Project, while Millennium Promise is responsible for the operational leadership. Many other partners have played and will continue to play a crucial role: UN agencies, corporations, private-foundations, non-governmental organizations, scientists, and other international development specialists. These partnerships are essential for the cutting-edge dynamism and success of the overall effort.



Jeffrey D. Sachs  
Director of the Earth Institute, Columbia University and  
Director of the Millennium Villages Project

### Year-3 Result Highlights across 11 Millennium Villages

Malaria prevalence among all age groups



Children sleeping under insecticide-treated mosquito nets



Households with access to improved drinking water



Students benefitting from school meal programs



Births delivered by skilled health personnel



Adults tested for HIV in the last 12 months



Average maize yields (across 6 sites)



Baseline

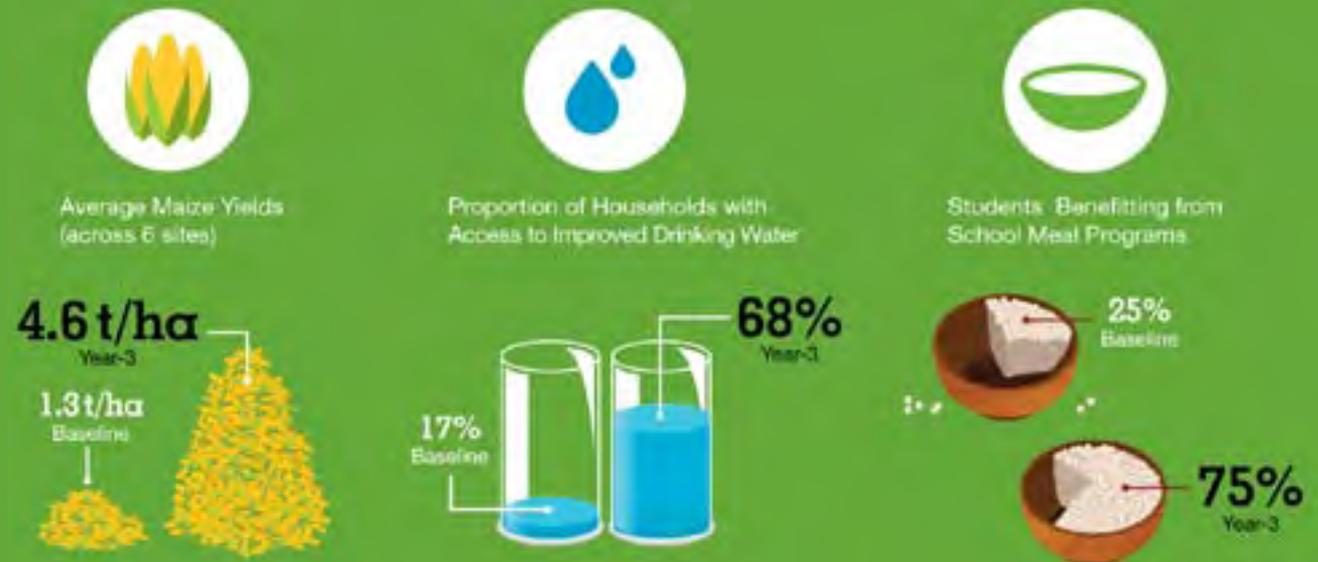
Year-3

## MILLENNIUM VILLAGES PROJECT

# RESULTS: 2006-2010

Over the first five years, the Millennium Villages Project reached nearly half a million people in 10 countries across sub-Saharan Africa. To date, the Project has shown that simple interventions applied through an integrated approach can bring substantial change.

In the first three years, average results across 11 Millennium Villages include:



# The First Five Years: Activities & Results

The following pages highlight activities and results in each sector from the first five years of the Millennium Villages Project.<sup>2</sup> Early efforts in the villages included “quick-win” interventions like free distribution of mosquito nets and subsidized fertilizer that set the foundation for more involved work. Some longer-term initiatives that are a major priority going forward, such as business development, started in the first phase.

## I. OVERVIEW OF RESULTS, 2006-2010

### Agriculture & Business Development

In the agriculture sector, inputs like improved seeds and fertilizers, coupled with farmer training, at least doubled and in some sites more than quadrupled maize crop yields in the first few years of the Project. In turn, levels of chronic under-nutrition (stunting) have decreased by a third.

In some Millennium Villages, cooperatives of farmers have begun to sell their surplus crops to regional buyers including the World Food Programme, which has purchased more than 500 metric tons of beans and grain from three sites—Gumulira and Mwandama (Malawi) and Bonsaaso (Ghana)—since 2009. More local farmers are also donating a portion of their crop surpluses to the school meal program, which is helping to make it possible for 75% of students Project-wide to receive a meal at school every day, an intervention that supports better learning outcomes.

### Education

Across the board, levels of primary school enrollment have increased by 10%. In five years, more than 40 new primary and 13 new secondary schools have been constructed, and 770 classrooms built and refurbished Project-wide. From negligible levels at baseline, as of Year-5, nearly 20% of schools have electricity, 60% have access to improved water sources, and 40% have gender-separate latrines. The student-teacher ratio has dropped by 12%. Donors like Ericsson are helping to make these results possible.

### Health

Extensive achievements in the health sector are due in part to building and refurbishing clinics, and supplying them with appropriate levels of staff and equipment including water, electricity, and essential drugs. In addition, ambulances, mobile phone coverage, and improved roads have helped strengthen the health system. Free primary health care at the point of service—a cornerstone of the Project’s approach to improving public health—has been successfully introduced at all sites. The Project has also introduced a system of well-trained, professional community health workers.

Positive results are emerging due to these and other investments. There has been a nearly threefold increase in the proportion of adults who have been tested for HIV in the past 12 months. The chance that a mother has given birth with a skilled attendant by her side—critical to helping prevent maternal deaths—has increased from 31% at baseline to 48% at Year-3. Measles vaccination coverage has increased from 64% to 80%. And three years after the Project distributed free insecticide-treated mosquito nets, bed net use is at 51%, a more than sixfold increase over baseline levels. This corresponds to a dramatic 72% reduction in malaria prevalence on average across 11 Millennium Village sites.

### Infrastructure & Innovation

Through partnerships with governments and the private sector, communities have made major gains in improving access to basic infrastructure. At baseline, just 20% of households were within 2 km of an electricity grid, a share that has now more than doubled. Extensive roadwork and bridge building projects have greatly improved the ability of ambulances, traders, and residents to get where they need to go. In addition, innovations like metered solar energy systems, improved cookstoves, and cell phone-based information technology are bringing better services and new opportunities for growth to Millennium Village communities.



### Water & Sanitation

An estimated 94% of diarrheal diseases—the second leading cause of death among children under five—are attributed to unsafe drinking water, inadequate sanitation, and poor hygiene. Improving access to cleaner water and better sanitation means healthier communities, as well as a reduced burden of labor on women and children. Across the Millennium Villages, more than 330 miles of water pipe have been installed, bringing safer water points closer to tens of thousands of homes. This fourfold increase in access to improved water is complemented by a threefold increase in access to improved sanitation facilities Project-wide.

### Gender Equality & Environment

Central to its design, the MVP works to ensure that gender equality and environmental sustainability run centrally through all Project activities and interventions. Ecological standards inform the Project’s agriculture, business development, and infrastructure planning, and initiatives include finding alternatives to kerosene and other expensive, polluting sources of energy, and planting trees for fuel, reforestation, and to combat soil erosion. Likewise, special attention is given to mainstreaming issues faced by women and girls across sectors. Maternal and child wellbeing is the focus of the Project’s health initiatives, and increasing the proportion of girls in school is key to success in the education sector.

<sup>2</sup> Information presented in this report profiles observed changes across the 11 Millennium Village research sites unless otherwise noted. The data is intended to be illustrative only, and to enhance public understanding of the program. It should not be interpreted as formal scientific reporting. Forthcoming scientific reports will be subject to formal peer-review and will detail a wider range of indicators, highlight sector-specific data, and will compare changes to reference groups including comparison villages and national reference sources. To access the Project’s scientific documents, please visit [www.millenniumvillages.org/resources](http://www.millenniumvillages.org/resources).

## Summary of Activities & Results, 2006-2010

### Agriculture

**GOAL:** Increase food production and incomes

#### ACTIVITIES

- Supporting farmers with fertilizer from partners Agrium, Mosaic, and Yara, along with improved seeds, first as subsidy and gradually shifting to credit
- Providing training to farmers in agronomic techniques
- Diversifying production with nutritious, high-value crops and livestock
- Building grain warehouses for better storage

#### RESULTS

- Maize yields have doubled—and in some sites quadrupled—with similar increases for other staple crops, contributing to a one-third reduction in levels of chronic malnutrition among children under two
- Efficiency and sustainability of farming practices have been improved
- Opportunities for commercial sales have expanded
- Crop losses have been reduced, incomes have improved, and there is now better farmer access to markets and buyers

**We know that no single intervention is enough. In order to effect lasting change in any one area, we must improve them all.**



### Infrastructure & Innovation

**GOAL:** Increase access to modern energy and transport services, and information and communications technology (ICT)

#### ACTIVITIES

- Building and rehabilitating all-weather roads
- Providing on- and off-grid (solar) electricity to communities and homes
- Expanding mobile phone network coverage and developing mobile data tools in partnership with Ericsson
- Developing innovations such as ChildCount+, used by CHWs to gather health data and receive diagnoses via mobile phone service

#### RESULTS

- Percentage of households within 2 km of an all-weather road and an electricity system has doubled
- Monitoring of child and maternal health has improved



### Business Development

**GOAL:** Transition from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture to ensure sustainability of Project gains

#### ACTIVITIES

- Forming cooperatives and providing access to financial services
- Identifying new revenue streams, producing business plans, providing skills and management training, and developing value chains
- Forging links with regional buyers, including the World Food Programme's Purchase for Progress initiative

#### RESULTS

- More than 85 businesses and cooperatives launched across 10 Millennium Villages
- Businesses are being built around cocoa extraction in Bonsaaso (Ghana), melon cultivation in Tiby (Mali), fish farming in Sauri (Kenya), and cassava mills in Mwandama (Malawi), among others
- Surplus from grain warehouses in three sites have been sold to the WFP for distribution to communities in the region that need food aid



### Water & Sanitation

**GOAL:** Increase access to safer water and adequate sanitation

#### ACTIVITIES

- Making improved water available closer to homes by drilling and rehabilitating wells and boreholes, installing pumps, and protecting natural springs
- Installing piped water systems
- Building ventilated improved pit latrines

#### RESULTS

- Access to improved drinking water has increased fourfold
- More than 330 miles of water pipe have been installed across the Millennium Villages donated by JM Eagle
- Access to improved sanitation facilities has increased nearly threefold



## Health



**GOAL:** Decrease rates of HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria, and improve maternal and child health

### ACTIVITIES

- Training community health workers, constructing and equipping clinics, and improving nutritional security with support from partners like Becton, Dickinson & Company
- Distributing free bed nets, immunizations, and supplements
- Prioritizing maternal and newborn health through antenatal care, skilled birth attendants, and emergency obstetric care

### RESULTS

- Number of adults taking an HIV test in the past 12 months has increased nearly threefold
- Malaria prevalence has dropped by 72%
- Nearly 50% of mothers are delivering babies with a skilled birth attendant, and, as of Year-5, antenatal HIV testing rates are at 90%



## Education



**GOAL:** Increase the quality of education and ensure universal primary education

### ACTIVITIES

- Building and renovating schools and classrooms
- Launching the school meals program in partnership with the communities, the Table for Two Foundation, and the World Food Programme, to boost student attendance, nutrition, and performance
- Providing teacher training, computers, and Internet access to schools
- Equipping schools with water points, improved latrines, and electricity

### RESULTS

- More than 40 primary schools and 13 secondary schools have been rehabilitated
- Approximately 770 classrooms have been built or refurbished
- School meals are being provided to 75% of enrolled students
- Hundreds of computers and laptops have been distributed to schools, including nearly 200 donated by Lenovo for on- and off-grid schools and ICT kiosks



## Environment



**GOAL:** Ensure environmental sustainability

### ACTIVITIES

- Planting trees to provide fuel wood and to reforest depleted areas
- Training farmers in integrated soil fertility management practices to sustainably improve harvests
- Building erosion control structures to protect farmland and promote restoration of degraded lands

### RESULTS

- More than 2.5 million tree seedlings have been produced to foster renewal of an essential resource
- Number of farmers practicing composting, interplanting, and proper fertilizer application has increased, bringing sustainable support of higher crop yields
- Gabions, trenches, and vegetative barriers have been built in several sites to reduce damage to fields and roads caused by erosion



## Gender Equality



**GOAL:** Improve gender equality and empower women

### ACTIVITIES

- Emphasizing to parents the importance of education for girls
- Installing gender-separate latrines in schools
- Facilitating girls clubs and other girl-focused services
- Prioritizing maternal and reproductive health
- Supporting women's participation in all levels of the Project

### RESULTS

- Girls' enrollment and attendance in primary and secondary school has increased
- In more than half of the sites, the gender parity index (ratio of enrolled girls to boys) is .97 or higher; in four sites, the number of girls enrolled in school exceeds the number of enrolled boys
- Number of women-run businesses, women's cooperatives, and women in leadership roles has increased throughout the Millennium Villages





## II. MEASURING RESULTS

Underpinning the Millennium Villages Project is a robust MDG-based monitoring and evaluation (M&E) platform that serves to:

- **measure** results,
- help determine the **effectiveness** of the interventions,
- improve **planning** and the allocation of resources,
- strengthen service **delivery**, and
- demonstrate key **results** to governments.

Strong evaluation is vital, both for strengthening the link between good science and sound policy, as well as to ensure public confidence in how limited resources are deployed. With hundreds of millions of people still living in extreme poverty, there is a pressing need to better understand how rapid gains can be achieved to maximize the impact of every dollar spent.

A detailed monitoring and evaluation platform has been established to monitor program performance, assess progress toward the MDGs, explore key barriers and facilitators to implementation, and evaluate the costs of the interventions. The main elements of this platform are highlighted below.

### Performance Monitoring

Performance monitoring tracks the timing and sequence of interventions, as well as month-to-month progress in key sectors.

The Millennium Villages Information System (MVIS) was developed specifically to facilitate monitoring of dozens of indicators relevant to the MDGs. The data collected is uploaded directly from the field, using either a computer with Internet connection or a cell phone with text messaging (a technology called “rapid-SMS”). This allows Project teams to closely follow indicators such as deliveries in health facilities, immunization coverage, school attendance, and child mortality.

Further modules, such as ChildCount+ and the Verbal Autopsy system, can be integrated into the MVIS. This “one-stop shop” allows MVP staff to see progress in real time, and make course corrections where needed, thanks to a system of automated reports.

Another performance monitoring tool leverages GPS mapping of schools, water points, and health facilities using simple, inexpensive android phones. This information helps identify specific gaps in staffing, services, and infrastructure, indicating, for example, which schools need repairs and which clinics are out of stock. When this data is linked to the MVIS, it allows even more detailed monitoring and can act as an early-warning system for threats such as outbreaks of measles, malaria, or cholera.

### Impact Assessment

Impact assessments help the Project to track progress toward MDG targets in the Millennium Village sites. The MVP has developed a set of survey tools that bring together best-practice modules from a variety of sources (including the Demographic and Health Survey, UNICEF’s Multiple Indicator Clusters Survey, the World Bank’s Living Standards Measurement Study, and the World Health Organization’s Nutrition Landscape Information System and Drinking Water and Sanitation surveys).

Impact assessment is a two-part process. First, an adequacy assessment compares Project performance against a fixed set of goals, which in this case is the achievement of the MDGs in a 10-year period. Then a plausibility assessment seeks to determine if the observed changes are the result of the Project rather than the product of wider factors such as general economic changes, climate, or external shocks, all of which might influence results.

The plausibility assessment is done in two ways. The Project identifies the impact pathways that link interventions with outcomes, such as how the use of improved seeds and fertilizer may result in improved crop yields, higher incomes, and better child nutrition. The Project also measures results against a set of reference data, including similar comparison sites that are not receiving the interventions, as well as nationwide averages for rural areas.





## Process Evaluation

Process evaluations examine the design and effectiveness of local systems. They help to answer questions such as, “How can community health workers use cellphones to effectively diagnose and treat malaria at the household level?” or “What are the most appropriate mechanisms for providing small-scale loans for agriculture?”

Process evaluations also analyze the Project’s novel interventions, examining, for example, how the elimination of user fees at a particular primary care facility affects health service utilization and access to vital health services in a given area.

## Economic Costing Module

The final main element of the M&E system measures costing and economic viability of the Millennium Villages Project. Governments, private donors, and partner organizations, in addition to in-kind resources from the community and core MVP funding, provide technical, financial, and in-kind inputs into the Project. The nature and intensity of the various contributions differ substantially among MVP sites. Systems to document these contributions, their source, and the value of each component are critical to understanding the costs and benefits of the MVP and in assessing the degree to which the Project approaches the model’s \$120 per capita threshold.

The economic costing evaluation accounts for all inputs, priced and non-priced, by sector and by stakeholder, noting how investments change over time. The costs will be paired against the benefits of the Project to assess cost-effectiveness and returns on investment.

In summary, the MVP’s M&E platform attempts to balance scientific rigor with practical, real-world questions of

feasibility, impact, and cost across some of the poorest and hardest-to-reach communities on the planet. They respond to questions about whether the MDGs can be achieved, and more importantly, what the most practical and locally appropriate strategies are for doing so. By including this comprehensive range of methods, we hope the Project provides a template for a balanced and diversified approach to evaluating large-scale programs to achieve the MDGs.

The components of the M&E platform are also being applied at scale. In the case of Nigeria, the MVP is providing technical support and assistance to track MDG-related progress in 113 local government areas, covering 20 million people. Other countries starting new Millennium Villages, including Chad, Ghana’s northern region, Liberia, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Sudan, are putting similar M&E systems in place for tracking implementation, progress, and costing in their MDG-based national scale-up programs.

**“The Millennium Villages Project has achieved remarkable results and has demonstrated the impact of greater investment in evidence-based, low-cost interventions at the village level to make progress on the Millennium Development Goals.”**

- Overseas Development Institute, November 2008

## External Review & Scientific Publications

External reviews and publication of Project results in peer-reviewed scientific journals are key components of measuring and verifying the impact of the Millennium Villages Project.

**External Review** The Overseas Development Institute conducted a formative review of the MVP and produced a synthesis report in November 2008, concluding that the MVP “has achieved remarkable results” and recommending that governments and donors learn from and scale up the lessons of the MVP approach.

**Interim Progress Reports** To assess progress, the MVP conducts detailed surveys at five evaluation periods (Years 0, 3, 5, 7, 9) over ten years. Data from the first three years of Project implementation across five Millennium Villages was released in May 2010 in the progress report *Harvests of Development in Rural Africa*.

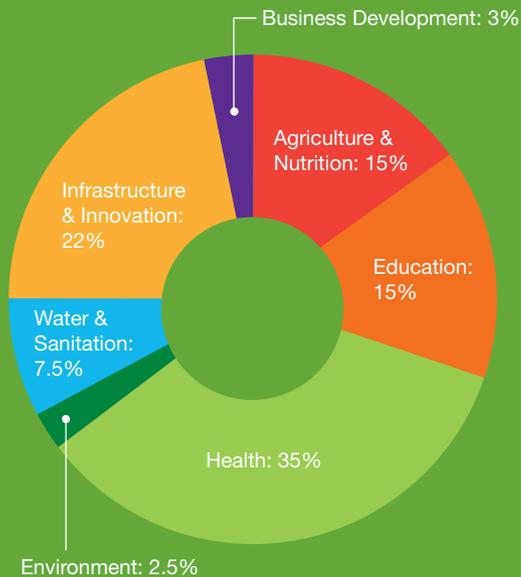
**Selected Scientific Publications** The evaluation protocol outlining the MVP’s assessment process has been externally peer reviewed and registered with *The Lancet* (protocol 09PRT-8648) and with the US National Institutes of Health (protocol NCT01125618).

### Recently Published Peer-reviewed Papers

- “A Multi-sector Intervention to Accelerate Reductions in Child Stunting: An Observational Study from Nine Sub-Saharan African Countries.” *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (in press), Roseline Remans, et al.
- “Use of an Innovative, Affordable, and Open-Source Short Message Service-based Tool to Monitor Malaria in Remote Areas of Uganda.” *The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* (March 11, 2011), Caroline Asiimwe, et al.
- “The African Green Revolution: Results from the Millennium Villages Project.” *Advances in Agronomy* (October 2010), Generose Nziguheba, et al.

For access to these and other scientific and policy publications, please visit [www.millenniumvillages.org/resources](http://www.millenniumvillages.org/resources).

## Intervention Budget Allocations, 2006-2010



In the first phase of the Millennium Villages Project, the budget allocations by sector reflect the strategy of supporting essential road building and other infrastructure projects, and “quick win” efforts like bed net distribution and fertilizer subsidies, alongside investments in longer-term initiatives. The Project is designed to ensure that gender equality runs centrally through all sector activities and interventions.

### III. IMPLEMENTING A COMPREHENSIVE, LOW-COST MODEL

At the Gleneagles Summit in 2005, world leaders pledged to increase official development assistance (ODA) for basic investments in the poorest countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, to approximately \$90 per African per year by 2010.

World leaders at these summits pledged to increase ODA for basic investments in the poorest countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, to approximately \$90 per African per year by 2010. The commitments extend to further increases through 2015, including the European Union’s pledge to reach the international target of directing 0.7% of its total GDP to ODA by 2015. These financial commitments underpinned a major policy breakthrough stating that every developing country would be supported in implementing a national strategy for achieving the MDGs.

The MVP reaches nearly a half million people across 14 sites in 10 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In the first five-year phase, each of the Millennium Villages had a donor budget for core interventions of \$60 per capita (\$24 million total) per year, which is half of the total project budget of \$120 per capita (\$48 million total) per year from all sources, including governments, communities, and other partners.<sup>3</sup> Of this per capita budget, \$110 directly supported MVP interventions in agriculture, education, health, infrastructure, gender equality, and business development, and \$10 was budgeted for establishing, training, and paying local staff to lead the village-based systems in each MVP site. The Soros Foundations Network contributed a five-year grant in the amount of \$10 million per year for the first phase MVP budget.

The Project was launched in 2006 with a budget of \$60 of direct support per capita per year, with a further \$60 per capita to be contributed by local governments (\$30), partners (\$20), and the village communities (\$10). In phase two, the MVP will provide a declining share of that external support as governments take on a greater share.

The proposed scaling up of community-based investments is also fully in line with the policy consensus articulated in the UN Secretary-General’s MDG Africa Steering Group Report (July 2008), which has also been adopted by the African Union. All of these are areas in which national and international programs, if properly scaled-up as promised at the Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development in 2002 and the G8 Gleneagles Summit in 2005, would enable country-scale investments at the levels envisaged in the MVP.

<sup>3</sup> The Millennium Villages at the core of the Project are not individual villages but rather clusters of several contiguous villages. There are a total of 80 villages comprising the 14 MV clusters Project-wide. In 2006, it was estimated that each of these 80 had an approximate population of 5,000. Therefore, for the first five-year phase, the Project’s donor budgeted amount per year was based on \$60 per capita multiplied by 400,000 people, and the total MVP budget per year was based on \$120 per capita multiplied by 400,000. However, due to factors of population growth, migration, and the broader service reach of key institutions like health clinics, the total MVP is estimated to reach approximately 500,000 people.



The MVP level of external support is less than existing global commitments for scaled-up aid.

### MV Project Expenditures Well Within Budget in First Four Years<sup>4</sup>



The Millennium Villages Project not only accomplished tremendous results in the first four years, but was able to do so within the budget envelope of \$120 per resident per year, a level of support fully consistent with internationally agreed levels of official development assistance. Moreover, local governments and communities met their investment targets. In the second phase of operations, local investments will continue to scale up while financial support from the Project tapers down.

<sup>4</sup> From baseline through Year-4. Complete costing data for Year-5 is forthcoming.

## Stories from the Millennium Villages

### Tiby (Mali)

#### Safer Water, Closer to Home

“Before the arrival of the new water system, we filtered rainwater through our clothes to drink,” says Mamafing Coulibaly, the Kominé village chief in the Millennium Village of Tiby (Mali). “Now, with the new boreholes and water system, we have much less waterborne disease.”

In this arid region, water is a precious and rare resource. Where water is scarce, women and children typically suffer the most. They often must walk long distances to unprotected sources and care for children who become sick with diarrhea or other waterborne diseases. This is exhausting work, and it diverts time from productive activities.

In partnership with village residents, village donors like Only the Brave, and the US manufacturer JM Eagle, which donated pipes, the Millennium Villages Project is drilling boreholes, installing pumps, and erecting water towers around Tiby. To date, more than 40% of Tiby’s 70,000 residents have gained access to improved water through the Project, and more coverage is on the way.



**335 Miles**

of water pipes installed across the Millennium Village sites

That’s about the same length as  
New York State’s Hudson River.



In Tiby (Mali), the number of households with access to an improved drinking water source has nearly tripled over three years.



## Potou (Senegal)

### Women Lead Breakthroughs in Economic Growth

A successful entrepreneur with a passion for helping her community, Thiama Diaw is a shop-owner and the president of Bokk Jamm, a federation of 125 women's business associations in the Millennium Village of Potou (Senegal). In the local Wolof, Bokk Jamm means "determination" or "together in pride."

While her employees tend to customers, Thiama describes how the women's business associations work. By pooling their profits, group members can take out loans. Some re-invest in their businesses, which range from cultivating hibiscus to producing cookstoves. Others pay for school fees and home improvements.

In addition to providing access to capital, women's associations throughout the Millennium Villages also offer training in farming techniques, nutrition, money management, and other valuable skills. It is often repeated that members find a strong sense of solidarity and empowerment from working and learning together.

By pooling their efforts and their profits, women are at the forefront of leading their communities out of extreme poverty—with determination, together in pride.

By pooling their efforts and their profits, women are at the forefront of leading their communities out of extreme poverty—with determination, together in pride.



## Ruhiira (Uganda)

### Midwives Deliver Health and Hope

Improved maternal and child health is one of the greatest success stories of the Millennium Villages Project in Ruhiira (Uganda). In this village, which is supported by a number of partners including the Tommy Hilfiger Foundation, institutional delivery has increased from 8% in 2006 to as high as 81% in 2011. Ruth's\* story is a good illustration.

When going into labor, Ruth was referred to the local Nyakitunda Health Centre in Ruhiira by her health worker. There, the midwives discovered that Ruth's twin babies were in breach. The MV ambulance transferred her to the operating theatre of the Kabuyanda Health Centre in time for skilled health workers, aided by emergency obstetric equipment provided by Project partner GE, to safely deliver her twins.

Ruth, who is HIV+, had received consistent counseling on how to stay healthy and prevent transmission to her babies during pregnancy and after childbirth. This, along with the cesarean-section birth method, will ensure that the chances of the twins being HIV negative are higher than 98%.

\* Not the mother's real name

# INNOVATIONS

## IN THE MILLENNIUM VILLAGES PROJECT

World-leading scientists and engineers bring **cutting-edge solutions to help end extreme poverty.** From energy-efficient lighting to cellphone-based mHealth systems, new technology is boosting progress across the Millennium Villages.

To bring electricity to Millennium Village residents that live in remote areas where national grid extension is difficult, the SharedSolar system links households to a solar-powered mini-grid. Customers pre-pay for power using mobile phones. The system works like this:



**1:** Location identified for central power system within 100 meters of consumers.

**2:** A solar power system generates electricity. A smart meter controls access.

**3:** Transmission lines run from the meter to each consumer. Consumers add energy credit to their account via SMS on their mobile phone.

## Technological Breakthroughs, Innovation, & Impact

To substantially increase access to modern energy, transportation, communication services, and water and sanitation by 2015, the Millennium Villages Project is introducing both proven technologies and innovative solutions to communities across the continent.

Some of the world's leading scientists, engineers, public health experts, and educators have come together through the Millennium Villages Project to create truly innovative solutions to ending extreme poverty. From introducing energy-efficient technologies to harnessing the mobile phone revolution, the MVP is the vehicle for bringing these innovations to hundreds of thousands of people across sub-Saharan Africa.

### I. APPLYING NEW TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST DEVELOPMENT

Leveraging the advantages of new technology to find solutions to development challenges is a key aspect of the MVP. For example, the Project's baseline survey demonstrated that the average household was spending most of its annual fuel budget on kerosene, an inefficient and expensive energy source. In response, the Project introduced portable LED lanterns with solar-rechargeable batteries. Through a market-based approach in which village-level vendors sell lanterns at retail price, the new technology brings not only more efficient lighting to homes, schools, and health centers, but also spurs local entrepreneurship.

Many other innovations—from pay-as-you-go piped water and solar energy systems to mHealth platforms—are supporting progress in the MVP. A number of these are highlighted in the following pages.

Looking ahead, the MVP is committed to addressing issues of sustainability and maintenance to ensure that energy and infrastructure initiatives endure beyond the timeline of the Project. This will involve strengthening information systems for reporting infrastructure status, fostering greater community involvement in monitoring technologies and roads, and other strategies.

In the long-term, the key to sustainability is scaling up, and therefore a main Project goal is to work with relevant government ministries and other stakeholders to create infrastructure programs that can plan for maintenance systematically and take advantage of economies of scale in every respect, both in the Millennium Villages and beyond.

The MVP is committed to addressing issues of sustainability and maintenance to ensure that energy and infrastructure initiatives endure beyond the timeline of the Project.



## II. NEW TOOLS & TECHNOLOGIES IN THE MILLENNIUM VILLAGES PROJECT

Alongside proven interventions, the Millennium Villages Project introduces new solutions to persistent development challenges. Leveraging innovative tools and technologies created by Earth Institute researchers and engineers as well as technologies developed by other institutions, the MVP serves as an incubator for new approaches to ending extreme poverty.

The rapid spread of mobile phones and network coverage has aided development everywhere, and mobile phone technology is the basis for many of the groundbreaking tools and systems developed by the MVP. With billions of mobile phone users worldwide and as many as 330 million in sub-Saharan Africa, the information and communications technology (ICT) revolution has transformed the way people live and is the driving force for economic development in the world today.

The Millennium Villages Project is working to integrate mobile technology into all sectors of its activities. The first step was to help increase mobile phone network access by working with lead MVP partner Ericsson to provide basic data connectivity to key institutions including schools, clinics, and ICT kiosks.

The effects are extraordinary. Pastoralists in nomadic communities use their cell phones to check prices and decide whether or not to bring their livestock to market. Schools that once sent students home when the sun went down due to lack of electricity now have solar panels to run lights as well as energy-efficient computers with wireless 3G Internet access. And community health workers deliver better quality and more efficient healthcare thanks to mobile phone-based health services like Child-Count+.

A number of the novel tools and systems introduced and, in many cases, developed by the Project are also being taken to scale regionally and nationally. Some of these innovations are highlighted here.

### Solar Lanterns

Most residents in the Millennium Villages must burn expensive kerosene to produce indoor light after sunset. Providing a cost-effective alternative to kerosene-based lighting, these lanterns use light-emitting diodes (LEDs) and are powered by solar-rechargeable batteries, which can also charge cell phones. The Project is helping to establish small businesses and train vendors in the villages to import and sell these lanterns to residents. Now available in several sites, solar lanterns are providing a brighter light for longer duration at lower overall cost.

The effects are extraordinary. Some schools that once lacked electricity now have solar panels to run lights as well as energy-efficient computers with wireless 3G Internet access.





### SharedSolar

SharedSolar is a system for delivering solar electricity to remote areas where grid extension is difficult. Households and businesses pay for electricity as they use it through pre-paid credit, similar to the model already widely used to purchase mobile phone time. Shared-Solar systems have been set up in Tiby (Mali), Mbola (Tanzania), and Ruhiira (Uganda), and show promising early results.



### Improved Cookstoves

The Project's improved cookstove program finds appropriate, more fuel-efficient alternatives to traditional three-stone fires. After conducting controlled cooking tests and surveys, the Project recommends technologies that not only provide efficient combustion, but also are compatible with local cooking preferences. The MVP is training vendors and strengthening cooperatives to help make improved cookstoves available for sale to households Project-wide.



### Long-lasting Insecticide-treated Mosquito Nets (LLINs)

The Project's early partnership with Sumitomo Chemical, the world's leading manufacturer of LLINs, contributed to a sea-change in international protocols on malaria prevention. Since 2006, Sumitomo Chemical has donated more than 700,000 of its Olyset nets to cover every sleeping site in every Millennium Village, which, paired with malaria treatment provided by Novartis, have contributed to a 72% reduction in malaria rates Project-wide.



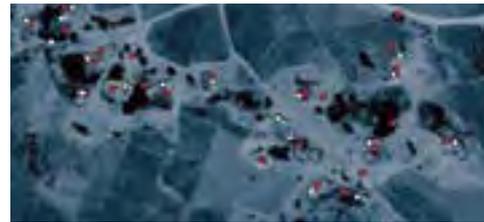
### ChildCount+

This groundbreaking new software is used by community health workers (CHWs) to track the health information of children and newborns through mobile phones using SMS text messaging via connectivity provided to Millennium Village sites by Ericsson. The system enables CHWs to monitor patients for nutrition, immunizations, and signs of common childhood illness. To date, the ChildCount+ platform has registered 140,000 patients, including 90% of children under the age of five Project-wide.



### Integrated Soil Fertility Management

Creating a system to provide universal access to fertilizers and improved seeds (first by subsidy, gradually shifting to credit), as well as skills training to farmers boosted crop yields, improved food security, and opened pathways to commercial farming in the first years of the MVP. Integrated soil fertility management practices that incorporate organic inputs with soil conservation techniques and mineral fertilizers are helping to sustain higher yields.



### Infrastructure Network Planner

This tool incorporates spatial data, key modeling parameters, and cost-optimizing geospatial algorithms to produce cost-effective, long-term infrastructure plans. It aims to answer questions such as how best to provide electricity to settlements that lack access, and has been used in the formation of electricity plans in Ghana, Kenya, and Senegal.



### Enhancing the Community Health Worker (CHW) System

The Project's CHW system delivers professional health care directly to households, providing a critical link between health centers and families in remote communities. CHWs administer essential services, from vaccines, supplements, and malaria tests to pre-natal check-ups and newborn care. The CHW system is supported by innovative mHealth tools, such as ChildCount+, and powered by connectivity provided by Ericsson.



### Verbal Autopsy

Senior CHWs are trained to conduct a Verbal Autopsy on all deaths of children under 5 and women of reproductive age. This is a questionnaire fielded to the next-of-kin or caretaker to determine the circumstances and approximate cause of death. This algorithm-driven tool, carried out within weeks of the death, is also used as a real-time management tool by clinic staff and CHWs to identify gaps in the health care delivery system and adapt interventions to improve systems and avoid future preventable deaths.

# 2011-2015:

## THE NEXT PHASE OF THE MILLENNIUM VILLAGES PROJECT

The ultimate goal of the Millennium Villages Project is to ensure that communities achieve the world's Millennium Development Goals and are firmly on the path to self-sufficiency when the Project ends in 2015.

Cooperatives and revolving funds are strategies for supporting community-based economic development. Here is an example of how revolving funds work in the Millennium Villages:



# Moving Forward: The Millennium Villages Project 2011-2015

In its next phase (2011-2015), the Millennium Villages Project will continue to prioritize achieving the MDGs by the 2015 deadline through four strategic priorities:

1. Support Business Development
2. Design Real-time Information Systems
3. Create Open-source Tools & Technologies
4. Transition to Full Local Ownership

A new financing model underpins these priorities, based on scaling back Project funding over time and ramping up funding from governments and outside partners while communities themselves become more financially capable of sustainably supporting their own development.

## I. SUPPORT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Promoting private sector agribusiness development to ensure self-sustaining economic growth is one of the Project's top priorities over the next five years. These efforts aim to improve farmer incomes, foster value chain development, increase local private sector investment in high-value commodities, attract local service providers, and increase the overall tax base that will help finance recurrent costs in the social sector over time.

Over the first phase of operations, the Project worked closely with communities and local governments to build a strong foundation for local economic development. These early efforts contributed to increased capital stock at both the individual and community levels, enabling a small yet growing trend toward private sector savings and investment.

Businesses that the Project has helped to establish so far include palm oil suppliers in Ghana, women's cooperative gardens in Mali, fish farms in Kenya, and cassava mills in Malawi and Rwanda. As these early enterprises take root and become

profitable, the MVP is learning lessons to improve business development efforts Project-wide.

### Establish Business Cooperatives

Over the next five years, the Project seeks to scale up the business cooperative approach, which has proven to be the strongest driver of income generation. By increasing the scale of their combined outputs, cooperatives maximize their bargaining power and gain better access to markets and credit. Cooperatives also benefit their members through skills training in agricultural techniques and business practices. They also support a valuable sense of teamwork and togetherness that helps propel success.

The Project further assists cooperatives through support for improving storage facilities to minimize post-harvest losses, and enhancing access to the latest market-information, particularly through new information and communication technologies. More than 85 businesses and cooperatives are currently operating throughout the Millennium Villages, with new groups forming every month.

### Increase Access to Agricultural Finance

In addition to establishing cooperative-based revolving funds that provide loans to members, the Project has attracted a number of local banks and financial institutions to places that previously lacked access to these services. The Project is also partnering with the private sector to provide the capital injection necessary to kick-start fledgling cooperatives and micro-loans to allow them to purchase agricultural inputs and other business needs on credit.

Under the envisioned financial services framework, investments will be made available at four scales over the next five years:

- Household-based enterprises (<\$1,000 through microfinance)
- Mid-scale cooperatives and village-level businesses (\$25,000-\$200,000 for community gardens, dairy business, etc.)



- Large-scale agribusiness enterprises (\$300,000+ for oil palm processing, large-scale honey production, etc.)
- Partnerships with local commercial banks to expand credit for smallholder agricultural finance (joint guarantee with Equity Bank in Kenya, for example)

Loans from cooperatives and external sources that are reinvested in profitable economic activities can catalyze a cycle of self-sustaining growth.

### Boost Market Share

To further support increased farmer incomes, the Project is working to strengthen access to commercial markets and boost market share through a number of approaches. These include:

- linking to larger markets and regional buyers (such as cocoa buyer Armajaro in Ghana),
- expanding production of high-value market crops, and
- developing value chains (increasing the value of a raw material by processing it into a higher-value product, such as milk into cheese, for example).

Successful rural businesses, built on a cooperative model with support from both communities and private sector partners, are key to sustainable income generation in the Millennium Villages over time.

## II. DESIGN REAL-TIME INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The second priority over the next five years is creating information systems that will provide real-time feedback to Project teams. In many low-income settings, information that tracks progress toward the MDGs at the local level is simply unavailable. Where it exists, the flow of information is one-way, too slow to facilitate the identification of vulnerable groups and coverage gaps, and not useful for making course corrections to improve access to essential interventions.

The MVP is already moving in the direction of achieving an unprecedented, comprehensive, real-time information system, based entirely online, which will be integrated with smart phones and other ICT systems. This will make meaningful, accurate data available on at least a monthly basis, providing a tremendous boost in the ability of managers and researchers to respond to observations with timely, appropriate action.

The Millennium Villages Information System (MVIS) is a web-based, purpose-built platform for real-time MDG monitoring that employs open-source systems and innovations in mobile phone technology.

The MVIS brings together multiple components, including sector-level performance monitoring, for capturing routine information across all major development sectors including health, education, infrastructure, and water and sanitation. The MVIS also integrates data from the ChildCount+ and verbal autopsy systems.

Taken together, these components of the MVIS platform have the potential to greatly enhance the flow of information between different levels of the system and dramatically reduce the delay in identifying and responding to health and development challenges. Moreover, it is designed as a scalable system, relevant and effective for MVP-inspired projects and national scale-up initiatives to use wherever they may be located.

## III. CREATE OPEN-SOURCE TOOLS & TECHNOLOGIES

Refining service delivery systems to ensure that all MDGs are achieved in health, education, infrastructure, and other core areas is the third priority for the Millennium Villages Project over the next five years.

One of the hallmarks of the MVP is the set of scalable systems introduced alongside program services to benefit rural populations not only in the Millennium Villages but anywhere that the MVP approach is applied.

A case in point is the MVP's community health worker (CHW) system, which provides personal household visits, basic preventative and curative care services, and stronger links to the national health system. Coupled with ChildCount+ and android-based phone systems to log vital events such as the birth or death of a child, the CHW system is supported by core management strategies and operational tools to rapidly train, support, and manage a scalable workforce of CHWs in rural areas. The Project envisions scaling up the system to one million CHWs across Africa over the coming years.

Metered energy and water systems established by the Project are also readily scalable, delivering greater access to electricity and safer water to more households. SharedSolar, for instance, is a service system that links off-grid households to solar electricity through a pay-as-you-go metering system. The Project is also developing technology-enabled educational tools. For example, Connect To Learn, through partnership with Ericsson, is bringing dynamic Internet-based learning opportunities to secondary schools, with a focus on educating girls.

As these and other systems are refined, they not only help improve service delivery in the Millennium Villages, but also offer broad-based insights to governments taking Project initiatives to the national scale. Coupled with advances in the MVIS, these systems are poised to become a powerful demonstration of "meaningful use" of technology, benefitting both research and vulnerable populations.



#### IV. TRANSITION TO FULL LOCAL OWNERSHIP

The Project offers the Millennium Villages special help over the course of a decade, on the premise that after ten years these communities will be able to continue progress on their own, without further grants from the MVP. Therefore the final main priority for the next five years is ensuring that, after 2015, the Millennium Village communities, backed by their national and local governments, will be in a position to carry on the enhanced systems put in place during the 2006-2015 Project period.

For example, farmer cooperatives, health facilities, primary and secondary schools, power networks, water systems, and the like, should continue to function and improve past the life of the Project itself.

This does not mean that the Project expects communities to be entirely self-sufficient by 2015. Every community will still depend on public services provided by national and district governments. The Project is counting on, and planning for, those public services to be of a quality and scale to carry on the work of the MVP. Moreover, the advances in incomes and farming should continue through the healthy functioning of the farmer cooperatives established during the Project.

The continued success of the Millennium Villages after 2015 will depend on much more than the MVP itself. The Project is working with national governments to help them scale up the quality of their own public services, drawing heavily upon the lessons of the MVP. It is working with donor agencies and international development organizations, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria, to ensure that they too are able to continue their crucial work past 2015.

In view of the closing of the MVP at the end of 2015, the Project will work with each host government, both nationally and locally, to ensure a smooth handover of functions over the next five years, so that 2015 does not mark a jarring “discontinuity” when the Project ends. During this time, more of the public services, such as schools and clinics, will rely on the government itself, as funding from the MVP is gradually withdrawn. Timetables will be established with host governments to ensure a smooth handover of leadership positions. Budgetary allocations will be discussed with the host governments as well, so that as MVP support is tapered down, local government and NGO support can sustain or even expand the respective public sector activities.



**The continued success of the Millennium Villages after 2015 will depend on much more than the MVP itself. The Project is working with national governments to help them scale up the quality of their own public services, drawing heavily upon the lessons of the MVP.**



“The next five years will be an exciting and challenging time for the MDG Centre as we bring together the latest scientific approaches...”

Dr. Belay Ejigu Begashaw is the director of the MDG Centre for East and Southern Africa in Nairobi, Kenya. He has more than 20 years of experience in agriculture extension and rural development, with past positions ranging from a grass-roots development agent to the Minister of Agriculture for Ethiopia.

## Letter from the MDG Centre for East & Southern Africa

This year, 2011, marks the halfway point between the launch of the Millennium Villages Project and 2015, when the global development targets set a decade ago are due to be realized. As we at the MDG Centre for East and Southern Africa, based in Nairobi, Kenya, embark on the next five-year phase of the Project, we do so from a solid foundation built in the preceding years.

Over the next five years, we will scale the lessons learned from the MVP up to district and national levels, giving millions more the tools to lift themselves out of extreme poverty. We will focus on scaling up proven practices in critical areas such as maternal and child health, and will continue building up health systems, empowering community health workers, and improving the medical supply system.

In addition, we will continue to help villages increase their incomes through local business initiatives, in partnership with the private sector. The cooperative model, in which groups of farmers pool their produce to maximize competitive advantage and bargaining power, has proven successful in several MVP sites, and will be scaled up.

Private sector partnerships are also important for attaining other priorities going forward. In Mozambique and Zambia, for example, the Brazilian mining company Vale has pledged to fund the launch of four new Millennium Villages in the coming years.

Partnerships with governments and national alliances are also important to ensuring the success of the next phase of the Project. In partnership with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the MDG Centre is organizing the Drylands Initiative, a multi-national effort spanning Africa's most arid regions, from Djibouti to South Sudan. The initiative addresses the challenges facing pastoralist communities living in these regions, which, as of this writing, are once again experiencing a severe drought that is putting great pressure on the people and their livestock.

The next five years will be an exciting and challenging time for the MDG Centre as we bring together the latest scientific approaches with the support of government and private sector partners to show that sustainable, community-led growth in even the poorest communities is within our grasp.

Dr. Belay Begashaw  
The MDG Centre for East & Southern Africa  
Nairobi, Kenya

## Financing Model for the Next Five-Year Phase

In the first five-year phase, the Project's financing model was based on \$120 per village resident per year, with the Millennium Villages Project providing about half of the funding and governments, communities, and other partners covering the other half. The model for the next five-year phase is based on gradually scaling down direct funding from the MVP as governments, communities, and other partners take up more of the financial responsibility.

In addition to ramping down reliance on MVP donor funding, donors will cover a smaller percentage of the per capita cost over the next five years, closer to 25% compared with 50% in the first five years. By 2015, the Project will be fully handed over to governments and, while remaining on a friendly basis with communities and perhaps continuing research in some sites, the MVP will no longer provide any direct financial support.

Building on progress made over the first five years, Project funding in Years 6-10 will be directed to interventions in the health, education, agriculture, and business development sectors. Continued support of the health sector is important, as healthy people are a basic requirement for communities to successfully take on the everyday challenges and opportunities of carving out productive livelihoods. Moreover, the Project has observed that even small user fees can prohibit people from visiting health centers with dangerous consequences, especially for mothers and children.



The MVP will also remain involved in education, for the cost of ensuring universal access to primary school is easily outweighed by the risks of not doing so. For communities to develop in the years to come, they need an educated workforce to rely upon.

Mobile banking is one way that Millennium Village residents gain access to financial services. This mobile bank, run by Opportunity International, serves the community in Mwandama (Malawi), offering savings accounts, small loans, and more.



In the agriculture sector, the MVP will support the formation of cooperatives, the development of business plans, linking farmers to markets and financial institutions, and business skill development.

Funding over the next five years will also support development of local African management, an important focus for the MVP going forward. Monitoring and evaluation teams in all sites tasked with performing surveys and assessing impact are covered by the budget model.

The Open Society Foundations have again generously committed to partner with the MVP for the next five-year phase of Project operations, with \$27.4 million pledged to support core MVP interventions, key staff positions, and financing the Project's monitoring and evaluation activities.

In addition, the Soros Economic Development Fund (SEDF) has committed to provide up to \$20 million in loans to support investment-worthy business projects that arise from the work of the MVP. The SEDF will rely on the MVP to oversee preparation, management support, and monitoring of these initiatives.

One of the first cooperatives in the villages to apply for the SEDF financing program is the New Yala Dairy Cooperative in Sauri (Kenya). The Project looks forward to reporting on the development of this and many more businesses over the coming years.

# SCALING UP & SUSTAINING GROWTH

The Millennium Villages model is fully realized when it is taken to scale. Scale-up efforts are already intensively underway in several countries across sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

Implementation Cost by Contributor over 10-Year Project Period



Artist's rendering,  
not meant to represent  
precise figures

## Taking the Millennium Villages Project to Scale

Governments throughout sub-Saharan Africa are investing in programs that take the Millennium Village approach to helping impoverished rural communities get on the path to sustainable development. While each country's plan is unique to the needs of its communities, all of the programs are designed to accelerate progress toward achieving the MDGs by addressing challenges in the overlapping areas of agriculture, environment and climate change, business development, education, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, and infrastructure.

Through the two MDG Centres in East and West Africa, the Millennium Villages Project is providing technical and policy support to help these governments embed MDG-focused interventions into national and regional development agendas and leverage lessons learned and best practices from the MVP.

### Drylands Initiative

The Drylands Initiative was launched in July 2010 to address the challenges facing pastoralist communities living in Africa's arid regions from Djibouti to South Sudan. This initiative focuses on water sustainability, sound infrastructure, and better communication to help create functioning economies in currently failing ecosystems. Steered by the MDG Centre for East & Southern Africa, the initiative is being modeled after the Millennium Village of Dertu in northern Kenya.

### The Green Sahel Initiative

In June 2011, the MDG Centre for West & Central Africa organized the first Africa Drylands Week in Dakar, Senegal, to explore the challenges posed by land degradation, climate change, and poverty in the circum-Saharan regions. The conference set a foundation for a drylands initiative in West & Central Africa through the Great Green Wall (The Green Sahel Initiative). Together with a coalition of stakeholders, the MDG Centre is launching a regional MDG scale-up effort in several countries to integrate greening into local development plans as part of this initiative.

### Benin

Over the next five years, the community of Banikoara in Benin (population 15,000) will benefit from targeted multi-sector interventions, with technical assistance from the MDG Centre West. This new Millennium Village, the first in the country, is part of the Growth Strategy for Poverty Reduction of Benin, a participatory approach aiming to increase household income and improve living conditions.

### Cameroon

The government of Cameroon plans to implement the Cameroon Millennium Villages Program (CMVP) with the financial support of the government of Japan and in partnership with the UNDP and the MDG Centre West. The CMVP will reach 50,000 people in two clusters of villages, one in Meyomessi (in the south of the country), and the other in Maroua (in the far north). Program activities will contribute to the implementation of the Growth and Employment strategy, taking the MDGs as the reference point.

### Chad and Sudan

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is partnering with the MDG Centre East on the IDB Sustainable Villages program in at least two countries, Chad and Sudan. Under this new partnership, teams from the IDB and the MDG Centre have carried out preliminary baseline surveys in the identified program areas. The program is expected to enter its implementation phase at the end of 2011, and may expand to include additional countries in the coming years.

### Ghana

The government of Ghana is scaling up the MVP in the northern regions with the aim of fulfilling the country's MDG-based development agenda. The scale-up will extend northward from the Millennium Village of Bonsaaso to reach approximately 25,000 people in districts across the Ashanti, Northern,

## Countries Working to Scale Up the Millennium Village Approach



### GOVERNMENT-LED SCALE-UP INITIATIVES

1. Benin
2. Burkina Faso
3. Cameroon
4. Chad
5. Djibouti
6. Ethiopia
7. Ghana
8. Kenya
9. Liberia
10. Madagascar
11. Mali
12. Mauritania
13. Mozambique
14. Niger
15. Nigeria
16. Rwanda
17. Senegal
18. Somalia
19. South Sudan
20. Sudan
21. Tanzania
22. Uganda
23. Zambia

### DRYLANDS INITIATIVE

5. Djibouti
6. Ethiopia
8. Kenya
18. Somalia
19. South Sudan
22. Uganda

### GREEN SAHEL INITIATIVE

2. Burkina Faso
3. Cameroon
4. Chad
11. Mali
12. Mauritania
14. Niger
15. Nigeria
17. Senegal



“ The MDG Centre looks forward to supporting achievement of the MDGs in West Africa over the next five years through effective scale-up initiatives...”

Dr. Amadou Niang is the director of the MDG Centre for West and Central Africa in Bamako, Mali. Trained in agroforestry, Dr. Niang has held agriculture research and development positions in different countries throughout Africa, and played a key role in establishing the Millennium Villages in the region.

## Letter from the MDG Centre for West & Central Africa

Over the next five years, the MDG Centre for West and Central Africa, based in Bamako, Mali, will continue to focus on scale-up initiatives, some of which are well under way, and support new countries wishing to adopt the Millennium Villages Project approach including Cote d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Mauritania, Niger, and Sierra Leone.

The most notable scale-up program is taking place in Nigeria, which has witnessed the results of integrated development in Ikaram and Pampaida, the existing Millennium Villages there. More than \$1 billion in debt relief funds will be disbursed across the country's poorest local government areas to address challenges in health, education, water, sanitation, and nutrition, reaching nearly one-fifth of the country's population.

In Mali, the MVP concept is being extended to 166 of the country's most food insecure rural communes. The MDG Centre is helping the government of Mali to develop MDG-based plans for these communes and to establish databases at regional and local levels. A scale-up initiative to cover northern Ghana is also underway and expected to launch in early 2012.

An agriculture-based scale-up project is also in the planning stages in Guinea. We are developing a program to increase local production of rice by 250%. Covering 25,000 hectares, the program is intended to increase the incomes of smallholder producers, facilitate the development of an effective value chain for rice, and strengthen capacities of farmer-based organizations and extension services.

Another important project in the next five years is the Green Sahel Initiative (GSI), also known as the Great Green Wall. Envisioned to be the West African counterpart to East Africa's Drylands Initiative, the GSI is intended to address the challenges posed by land degradation, desertification, climate change, and poverty in the circum-Saharan regions.

The MDG Centre looks forward to supporting achievement of the MDGs in West Africa over the next five years through effective scale-up initiatives and ensuring that gains made in existing Millennium Villages continue through to 2015 and beyond.

Dr. Amadou Niang  
The MDG Centre for West & Central Africa  
Bamako, Mali

and Upper East regions. Project set-up is expected to be completed before the end of 2011, with interventions starting in early 2012.

### **Kenya**

In 2011, the government of Kenya launched a national MDG scale-up policy in eight of its Western districts. The MDG Centre East helped formulate the strategy for these new “Millennium Districts,” which follow the Millennium Village model and offer training to local government officials to help guide the growth of MDG-focused activities. With support from the government of Finland, the initiative’s emphasis is on developing infrastructure, enhancing referral services from village to district health facilities, and boosting commercial activity.

### **Liberia**

With support from the government of Norway, the Kokoyah Millennium Village (pop. 24,000) in Liberia began operations in 2009 and is already showing promising results in the agriculture sector. Farmers have increased their rice yields by 275% from 0.8 t/ha to 3.0 t/ha. This success is encouraging more village residents to join farmers’ cooperatives.

### **Madagascar**

With initial financial support from the governments of Japan and South Korea, the Millennium Village of Saimbaina was started in Madagascar in 2008. The main operational partner is the UNDP, with a strong technical backing from the MDG Centre East.

### **Mali**

In June 2008, the government of Mali presented a strategy to scale up a Millennium Villages-inspired approach to support the country’s 166 most food insecure communes (districts) in achieving the MDGs. Reaching approximately 2.6 million people with special emphasis on northern regions, “Initiative 166” is a bold, targeted five-year multi-sector program to accelerate MDG implementation. The government is committed to financing 45% of the initiative and has asked the donor community for support for the remaining 55% of the budget.

### **Mozambique**

In 2011, the MVP signed an agreement with the Ministry of Science and Technology of Mozambique, establishing a multifaceted cooperation in the area of science and development. This partnership will strengthen the already existing relationship with the country, which hosts a group of Millennium Villages implemented by the UNDP. One area of collaboration is additional technical and policy support from both the MDG Centre in Nairobi and the Earth Institute in New York.

### **Nigeria**

The government of Nigeria, led by the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on the MDGs, is using the MVP model to achieve the Goals across the country’s poorest areas. The government is itself wholly supporting this scale up by using more than \$1 billion in debt relief funds. Since March 2010, the MVP and the Nigeria team have conducted a baseline inventory and a needs assessment from all existing schools, health clinics, and water points in 113 of the poorest local government areas. This data will be used to create the region and community specific development plans needed for the scale up.

### **Rwanda**

Working closely with the MDG Centre East, the Rwandan Ministry of Planning and Economic Development is preparing a draft policy to accelerate economic growth and social services. The program, scheduled for official adoption by the end of 2011, will scale up Millennium Village-type interventions to 416 administrative sectors. It is part of the country’s Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy, which aims to improve livelihoods through public works projects, microfinance, and microinsurance.

### **Tanzania**

In addition to the Millennium Village of Mbola located on Tanzania’s mainland, the MVP recently launched the first village where fishing is the main livelihood, on the island of Pemba, in Zanzibar. With core funding from KPMG, the global tax and advisory firm, implementation of the project began in January 2011 in a community of more than 7,600 people.



### **Zambia**

Following a detailed baseline survey and needs assessment, the first Millennium Village in a mining area in East and Southern Africa was launched in August 2010. Located in northern Zambia, the project is a partnership with the international mining company Vale. The Konkola community relies on copper mining as a main income source in addition to some subsistence farming. Over the coming years, the MVP and Vale will focus on income-generating activities, in addition to launching interventions in health, education, and the environment.

### **One Million Community Health Workers Campaign**

Providing health care services at the community level, community health workers (CHWs) are internationally recognized for their notable success in averting mortality in newborns and children, and contributing to improvements in maternal and child health. In May 2011, the One Million CHWs Campaign was launched by the MVP with partners UNAIDS, the UN MDG Advocates, and the Office of the Secretary-General. Several pharmaceutical companies are also on board to help leverage scientific evidence, political energy, and financial will to mobilize at least one million CHWs across sub-Saharan Africa as part of national primary health care systems and in support of the MDGs.

### **Connect To Learn**

Connect To Learn (CTL) is a new global education initiative to support greater access to secondary education, especially for girls, alongside increased broadband connectivity in schools. CTL provides three-year scholarships to attend secondary school and covers tuition, books, and uniforms as well as access to Internet-enabled technology. CTL is a partnership initiative led by the Earth Institute and Ericsson.

## II. PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE UNITED NATIONS



“Today, I call on every country to look closely at this success. It is a case study in what is possible, even in the poorest places in the world.”

- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon  
visiting the Millennium Village of  
Mwandama (Malawi), May 2010

The Millennium Villages Project’s partnerships with UN agencies and host-country governments ensure strong national-level support and important links to global policy agendas. Implementation of UN programs at the village level benefits from the integrated development approach and overall increased investments across sectors. Key UN partnerships include the following.

Together with **UNAIDS**, the MVP is working to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV in the villages. The partnership aims to provide technical support to community health workers for HIV testing of pregnant women, to help mothers and children living with HIV, and to educate communities on HIV prevention. Additionally, the MVP health team contributed to the development of the UNAIDS Global Plan to Eliminate New Infections among Children by 2015, and is now working to scale up the deployment of trained community health workers.

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** played a critical role in the first phase of the MVP by providing project management and operational support. In the next phase, it will collaborate with the MVP on promotion and implementation of MDG-based policies by scaling up lessons learned through the Project to the national and regional level, and by supporting governments in the implementation of new Millennium Villages.

The **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** and the MVP work together to promote universal access to reproductive health by developing voluntary, safe, and effective community-based family planning services and providing free, universal, and equitable access to appropriate optimal contraceptive methods in all Millennium Villages. In Ethiopia, in addition to working jointly in the Millennium Village of Koraro, a site also supported by donors including the Nike Foundation, the MVP team is implementing UNFPA-funded projects across the district of Hawzien.

Over the last year, the MVP collaborated with **UNICEF** to develop innovative tools for health. Among the most promising is the use of mobile phone applications for monitoring acute and chronic malnutrition. The Project is

also collaborating with UNICEF on the implementation of early childhood development programs.

Starting in 2011, the **United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)** provides human resource management services for MVP operations in Africa. UNOPS implements more than \$1 billion worth of projects for its partners every year, operating in more than 80 countries, often in the most challenging of environments. It provides administrative, operational, and other support services to governments, intergovernmental entities, international financial institutions, NGOs, the private sector, foundations, and the rest of the United Nations system.

The partnership with the **World Food Programme (WFP)** aims to establish “undernourishment-free zones” in the Millennium Villages. Its objectives include ensuring universal school meal coverage in primary schools; meeting the nutritional needs of children affected by HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and other pandemics; and working with smallholder farmers to boost productivity and incomes through the Purchase for Progress (P4P) program and other WFP initiatives. These programs have shown strong results. For example, farmers in three Millennium Village sites—Gumulira and Mwandama (Malawi) and Bonsaaso (Ghana)—have sold more than 500 metric tons of maize and beans to the WFP for distribution to communities in the surrounding area who require food aid. The WFP has also supported the MVP’s school meal program in over 80 schools in seven countries.

Through partnership with the **Broadband Commission for Digital Development**—a joint initiative of the **International Telecommunications Union** and **UNESCO**—the MVP is working to design new models for using broadband and mobile connectivity to benefit communities. In education, for example, the Connect To Learn initiative is providing access to quality secondary education for girls through scholarships and broadband technology.



## Project Targets and the MDGs

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—endorsed in 2000 by all United Nations member states—are the world’s shared framework for development. The MVP’s program targets are aligned with the MDGs, and Project interventions are specifically designed to achieve the Goals.

MDG	Project Target
<b>GOAL 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that less than 25% of households live below the poverty line</li> <li>• Among children under five years old, reduce stunting to less than 20%, underweight to less than 10%, and wasting to less than 5%</li> </ul>
<b>GOAL 2. Achieve universal primary education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that more than 90% of children are in school and enrolled in a class appropriate for their age</li> </ul>
<b>GOAL 3. Promote gender equality and empower women</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the gender parity ratio in primary education is higher than 0.9</li> </ul>
<b>GOAL 4. Reduce child mortality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce child mortality to less than 40 deaths per 1,000 births</li> <li>• Increase measles immunization and vitamin A supplementation to more than 90%</li> </ul>
<b>GOAL 5. Improve maternal health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce maternal mortality to less than 150 deaths per 100,000 deliveries</li> <li>• Achieve more than 70% skilled birth attendance and institutional delivery</li> <li>• Achieve more than 40% use of modern contraception</li> </ul>
<b>GOAL 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child to less than 5%</li> <li>• Achieve more than 85% coverage of HIV/AIDS treatment</li> <li>• Increase the success of TB treatment to more than 85%</li> <li>• Reduce malaria prevalence to less than 5%</li> </ul>
<b>GOAL 7. Ensure environmental sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve more than 90% access to an improved drinking water source</li> <li>• Achieve more than 75% access to improved sanitation</li> </ul>
<b>GOAL 8. Develop a global partnership for development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize new ICT and mobile phone platforms to facilitate real-time program improvements in education, health care, and agriculture</li> <li>• Leverage private sector technology and innovation in a collaborative manner to improve agricultural yields and develop accessible and affordable alternative energy sources</li> <li>• Assure universal access to life-saving drugs including anti-malaria medicine and antiretrovirals</li> </ul>

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Millennium Villages Project



### 1. What are the Millennium Villages? How are they selected?

Millennium Villages are designed to demonstrate how the eight Millennium Development Goals can be met in rural Africa over 10 years through community-led development.

Located in 10 countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda), the Millennium Villages Project (MVP) helps nearly 500,000 people lift themselves out of extreme poverty through access to efficient technologies that can enhance their farm productivity, health, education, access to markets, and more while operating within the budget envelope established by international agreements for official development assistance.

Millennium Villages are selected in close coordination with local and national governments from areas prone to chronic hunger and diseases, and lacking basic services and infrastructure. The Millennium Villages cover different agro-ecological zones of sub-Saharan Africa, with the aim of showing that development is possible in all settings.

Critical to the success of the Millennium Villages is the principle that communities must be empowered to become the driving force of their own development. They are requested to give substantially of their time, skills, and resources.

### 2. What is unique about the Millennium Villages?

Millennium Villages offer a scalable multi-sector model for fighting poverty at the village level. The approach can be expanded from the village level to the district and national levels in countries across Africa and beyond. While integrated rural development programs of the 1970s and 1980s registered noticeable gains in rural communities in Asia and Latin America, the MVP approach adds new dimensions to fighting poverty.

- The MVP is explicitly linked to achieving the MDGs by 2015 and addresses an integrated and scaled-up set of interventions covering food production, nutrition, education, health services, roads, energy, communications, water, sanitation, and enterprise diversification. This type of comprehensive, time-bound approach has never been done before at this scale.
- The community is deeply involved in making and implementing decisions. For example, community members identify and evaluate possible interventions supported by a team of scientists and local partners. Together they create a package of village-specific interventions that are deemed most appropriate and cost effective, as well as

produce a community action plan for implementing and managing these interventions.

- The initiative uses improved science-based technologies and techniques that have only recently become available and affordable, such as agroforestry, mobile phones, insecticide-treated bed nets, antiretroviral drugs, the Internet, remote sensing, and geographic information systems.
- The Millennium Villages Project is linked to district- and national-level processes to ensure that the success can be scaled up by governments.

### 3. How does the Millennium Villages Project measure progress?

At the outset of the Project, levels of extreme poverty, underdevelopment, and poor health—with at least 20% of children undernourished—were recorded in the Millennium Villages, placing them far below national averages.

A review conducted after three years of interventions in 11 of the 14 Millennium Villages showed broad progress on a number of MDG indicators.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, progress is occurring throughout rural Africa as some of the same kinds of interventions are being scaled up widely. Efforts by national governments and donors to improve access to basic immunization and education, address malnutrition, and enhance access to drugs that prevent and treat AIDS, TB, and malaria are underway continent-wide.

A number of methods are used to examine whether progress toward the MDGs in Project sites are a result of the Project. To assess progress, the MVP conducts detailed surveys at five evaluation periods (Years 0, 3, 5, 7, and 9) over ten years. The evaluation is overseen by institutional review boards at Columbia University as well as in all host country governments. A detailed impact pathway assessment links exposure to specific interventions to a range of hypothesized and pre-specified intermediate outcomes.

The Project also compares observed changes to reference data collected from randomly selected comparison villages located nearby the MVP sites.

By mapping changes against national and sub-national data sets, the Project can assess whether observed changes might “outpace” those taking place more widely in countries. In addition, monthly

<sup>5</sup> Year-3 data from five of these Millennium Villages is presented in *Harvests of Development: The Millennium Villages after Three Years* ([www.millenniumvillages.org/progress](http://www.millenniumvillages.org/progress))



and quarterly performance data is used to help understand when major “tipping points” took place relative to the timing of interventions. Finally, qualitative implementation research examines the perceptions of Project implementers, recipients, and partners regarding which intervention components seem to be exerting the strongest and most consistent effects.

It is important to note that the MVP is not using a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design. RCTs are appropriate where interventions are unproven, where the context allows a large number of random units (in this case, villages) either to receive the intervention or act as a control group, and where areas acting as control groups are relatively untouched by the intervention being assessed.

The MVP is a demonstration project that works in a diversity of contexts where interventions are locally adapted to produce bottom-line results. In the MVP, sites were not chosen at random, but rather reflect the full range of agro-ecological settings on the African continent. Moreover, as previously mentioned, many interventions being assessed are already being scaled-up continent wide, making it nearly impossible to find nearby control groups that are entirely unexposed to their effects.

#### 4. How are national and local governments involved?

Once the sites are identified in cooperation with national authorities, governments participate in the Project’s implementation through in-kind contributions, extension workers seconded by ministries, and application of lessons learned in other regions. To ensure that the Millennium Villages are part of national discussion and policy plans, new villages are only initiated in countries where the leadership supports and engages in the MVP approach.

#### 5. Is corruption a concern in some host countries?

Corruption is a concern in many developing countries, including some where the Millennium Villages are located. Some parties argue that these countries should not receive any support until corruption has been eliminated. Fortunately, such an approach is not necessary, because with proper systems, feedback, information, and monitoring, the Project is able to hold corruption levels down and respond quickly if corruption arises.

The governments of the African countries where Millennium Villages are located are fighting corruption and are committed to development. Still, the Project does place paramount emphasis on the transparent and accountable use of its resources. To this end, extensive safeguards are in place to trace the flow of funds in each country and to ensure that the funding reaches the intended beneficiaries.

In addition, a defining characteristic of the MVP is that it takes a bottom-up approach, working directly with communities and channeling program funds at the community level. Rather than giving funds to national or regional governments and relying on a “trickle down” approach, this community-based direction helps overcome barriers that keep donor funds from reaching the populations for whom they are intended.

#### 6. Where is the Project achieving its best results?

The Project has registered noticeable “quick wins,” especially in areas where national programs were nonexistent or lagging behind, such as improved crop yields thanks to subsidized seeds and fertilizers, malaria control through bed nets, and improved school enrollment with the help of school meal programs.

Some more complex outcomes have also seen positive trends: improved yields, food security, diet diversity, and disease control have reduced stunting; community training, available supplies, and creative delivery strategies have resulted in higher use of contraceptive methods; and improved road networks, trained midwives, and new clinics have led to an increase in institutional deliveries.

Result highlights across 11 Millennium Village sites at Year-3 include the following:

- Malaria prevalence decreased by 72% (from 25% in 2006 to 7% in 2009)
- Children sleeping under insecticide-treated mosquito nets increased 629% (from 7% to 51%)
- Households with access to improved water increased 300% (from 17% to 68%)
- Students benefitting from school meal programs increased 188% (from 26% to 75%)
- Births delivered by skilled health personnel increased by 55% (from 31% to 48%)
- Across 6 sites, average maize yields increased from 1.3 t/ha to 4.6 t/ha

#### 7. What will happen after 2015?

The Millennium Villages aim to establish ground-level evidence showing that the recommendations of the UN Millennium Project—an independent advisory body that presented expert recommendation on how MDGs can be achieved—can break the poverty trap and help remote communities to achieve economic viability.

In an attempt to attain sustainable growth, the Project is testing a number of hypotheses. By raising productivity, diversifying into higher-value crops, and promoting off-farm employment, incomes will rise in the villages. Higher incomes will also raise household savings thus accelerating economic diversification and household investments in human capital. The resulting economic growth in the villages will reduce poverty and enable communities to finance a growing share of investments to achieve the MDGs. Over time, these communities will end their dependency on outside assistance, thereby ensuring sustainability.

A central proposition underpinning the Millennium Villages concept, therefore, is that operational sustainability can be achieved in each village before the 2015 deadline, although many villages will still require ongoing but generally declining financial support beyond then. For these villages, it will be crucial that existing ODA commitments are met and maintained until the respective developing countries graduate from the need for external support.

Critical to the sustainability of the Millennium Villages is the need to empower the entire community, including women and vulnerable groups, by building local technical, administrative, and entrepreneurial capacity. When it phases out, the Project will also leave behind infrastructure (roads, clinics, schools, communication towers, etc.) that will enable communities not only to maintain the gains registered under the Project but also to press on with its development.

## Conclusion

As the Millennium Villages Project enters the second and final five-year phase, its priority remains the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals while creating a scalable model for replication anyplace in the world where extreme poverty persists.

Building on results from the first five years, the Project will continue to rely on a realistic budget that falls within international aid commitments as it advances its focus from food security and subsistence farming to business development and commercial farming. A growing network of partners is helping to open up access to markets and financial services for smallholder farmers, and entrepreneurship is starting to take root. At the same time, countries and donors around the world are taking notice of the dramatic positive change that the MVP approach can bring.

For communities, this marks the beginning of a brighter future. Over the first five years of the Project, communities took their first steps on the path to sustainable development. Today the Millennium Villages are starting to receive the benefits of their hard work, achieving improved levels of health, education, and economic well-being.

For national governments, this marks an opportunity to tap into lessons learned from the Project's innovative approach and to scale up interventions, including them in national MDG plans with technical backing and support from the MVP.

For partners, this marks a new chance to build bridges with communities and empower them to access budding markets and promising human resources.

And for the MVP team, this marks the moment to strengthen the tools and systems for monitoring and evaluating the Project, gathering scientific data from the villages, and publishing it in peer-reviewed journals.

Ultimately, the lessons learned, technologies introduced, and progress recorded during the 10-year period of the Millennium Villages Project will remain with the country teams and in the public domain for all to consult and use for scale-up efforts everywhere.

The MVP will continue to support the remarkable transformation that Millennium Village residents are driving every day. The Project remains solid in its commitment to the work begun with support from all partners to see the achievement of the MDGs by 2015 and the end of extreme poverty in our lifetime.



Ultimately, the lessons learned, technologies introduced, and progress recorded during the 10-year period of the Millennium Villages Project will remain with the country teams and in the public domain for all to consult and use for scale-up efforts everywhere.



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**BREAKING THROUGH:**  
Millennium Villages Project Year Five

**CONTACT THE MILLENNIUM VILLAGES PROJECT**

**Millennium Villages Project**  
2910 Broadway (Hogan Hall)  
New York, NY 10025  
[www.millenniumvillages.org](http://www.millenniumvillages.org)

**The MDG Centre, East and Southern Africa**  
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri  
PO Box 30677-00100  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Phone: +254-207224481  
Fax: +254-207224490  
[www.mdgcentre.org](http://www.mdgcentre.org)

**The MDG Centre, West and Central Africa**  
BP 320, Hippodrome Rue 287, Porte 341  
Bamako, Mali  
Phone: +223-20219133  
Fax: +223-2021934  
[www.centreomd.org](http://www.centreomd.org)

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**CREDITS**

**Amy Shaw**  
Managing Editor

**Erin Trowbridge**  
Executive Editor

**Joelle Bassoul**  
**Lucy McClellan**  
**Paul Pronyk**  
Contributing Editors

**Sunghee Kim**  
Designer/Creative Director

**FreeAssociation**  
Contributing Illustrator

**Brilliant Graphics**  
Printer

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