

Sustainable Land Management



Value of a village health system - The example of the Deki Lefay clinic

The community profiles have thankfully led to concrete improvements in rural living conditions. For example, based on a profile that our project compiled for the community of Deki Lefay in the southern highlands, a simple clinic was built.

The clinic provides valuable services in both curing and preventing disease. For example, the clinic's director was able to persuade the inhabitants of a nearby village that their health problems were largely connected with the poor water quality in the local water source - a hole in the bed of a river that dries up the dry season.

Using himself as a guinea-pig, he showed that after drinking the same water he began to suffer the same symptoms as the village people. The village then set about digging a new well, partly in rocky subsoil and with only the simplest of tools, until groundwater was struck at a depth of six meters. With the help of local experts, the well was walled in to prevent contamination.

The health condition of the local population has since improved remarkably - a perfect example of sustainable development, which it was possible to implement in this case with very little money.

Due to the study's results, our program is also supporting the building of a Junior Secondary School in the region. Children leaving primary school previously had to travel to the nearest district town if they wanted to continue their education.

In view of the distance and the bad transport situation, this meant that they had to live away from home with relatives, or in lodgings. Most parents were not able to afford this. In addition, they were particularly unwilling to let the girls leave home - as a matter of principle, but also because it meant that the parents' household would lose a worker.

Thanks to the new school, the children are now able to go home every day. We are hoping that this will improve the opportunities for further education for local young people, and particularly for girls, as time goes on.

There is an urgent necessity for this: due to the shortage of land, many young people will in future have to make a livelihood outside of agriculture. Having a sound formal education is essential for this.

Education brings the prospect of alternative sources of income, and these in turn can be decisive in preventing the pressure on local resources such as soil and water from simply increasing continuously. In this way, the school is ultimately also making a contribution to sustainable land management - our program's central concern.

Incidentally, the building of the school is now almost finished, despite the border war that took place in the meantime, and it will be possible to start teaching shortly. The teachers are being appointed and paid by the state.