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The Contribution of the Millennium Village Project to the Socio–Economic Transformation of Communities in Ruhiira Village, Isingiro District.

The study assessed the contribution of the Millennium Village Project (MVP) to the socio-economic transformation of communities with a case study of Ruhiira village, Isingiro district in South Western Uganda. The specific objectives of the study were to find out how the MVP has contributed to improved agricultural practices and production in the community; to identify existing interventions and gaps in the area of education; and to find out the sustainability mechanisms being put in place to ensure continuity of project interventions. The study adopted a case study design with both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis. The research was carried out in the sub-county of Kabuyanda where one hundred respondents participated. Interviews, questionnaires, observations and document analysis constituted the major methods of data collection. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to identify respondents who included household members, head teachers, local council leaders, cluster heads and Community Development Officers. The major findings revealed that the MVP has laid emphasis on education and agricultural development as key sectors with potential to generate spill over benefits to other sectors. The key interventions in agriculture included; provision of fertilisers, subsidised and improved quality seeds, assistance to farmers in marketing of produce, and dissemination of knowledge of improved agricultural practices. In the area of education, findings revealed that key interventions are provision of meals to Universal Primary Education pupils, scholastic materials, training of teachers and construction of classrooms. The findings also revealed that the MVP has empowered communities in planning, implementation and monitoring of project interventions, involvement of local governments and formation of farmer groups and committees all geared towards sustainability of project interventions. Major recommendations of the study necessitate the government to take a leaf from MVP interventions and replicate the same in several other rural areas; the farmers should continue to be taught better skills of practicing meaningful agriculture; provision of better and improved seeds should continue; better storage facilities be set up to keep farmers produce during periods of bumper harvests; and marketing of farmers produce should be widened to include international markets in order to fetch better prices. Teacher training should be continued and teaching incentives be introduced to cater for rural teachers and more classrooms be constructed to accommodate the ever increasing pupil numbers under the current Universal Primary Education arrangement.

Key Words: Millennium Village Project, Socio–Economic Transformation, Communities, Isingiro District.