

Fostering local development

Context

Haiti is one of the world's poorest countries. Some 60 per cent of its people live in poverty and at least 40 per cent can neither read nor write. The causes of the country's precarious situation are political instability, bad governance and the neglect of public investment. Besides, annual hurricanes repeatedly wipe out people's efforts to secure their own food supplies. HEKS/EPER promotes development in the remote department of Grand'Anse, which was hit particularly hard by Hurricane Matthew in October 2016. Much of the population in this region live in hard-to-reach mountain areas and can only get to the nearest market or village via roads and paths in very poor condition. What little infrastructure there was, and the once luxuriant vegetation that provided residents with a livelihood were all but destroyed by the hurricane. HEKS/EPER responded rapidly to the disaster and mounted an emergency aid programme to meet the most pressing needs. Some months later, longer-term development projects were resumed – with the aim of helping to provide more resilient living conditions for the local people through improved access to basic services. The transfer of responsibility to local communities is paving the way for autonomous and needs-based development.

Objectives, priorities, activities

The HEKS/EPER Country Programme in Haiti is helping to create a higher, more resilient standard of living for residents of remote mountain regions of Grand'Anse. Access to basic services is to be improved through the promotion of higher incomes and greater food security by upgrading rural infrastructure and fostering dialogue between rural communities and local authorities.





Promoting higher incomes and food security: HEKS/EPER promotes high value-added agriculture. This includes, for example fruit and vegetable cultivation and the keeping of small animals. It also entails processing and marketing products so as to boost earnings, which in turn enable communities and producer groups to invest in processing and refining their products. Parent committees are also able to help fund the schools they support with HEKS/EPER assistance, thereby providing access for their children to education.

Upgrading rural infrastructure: To help communities living in the difficult-to-access mountain areas of Grand'Anse find a way out of their isolation and gain better access to basic services, HEKS/EPER assists them in upgrading rural infrastructure such as roads, markets and schools. To ensure that infrastructure is maintained and that schools keep functioning, local community structures are mobilized and strengthened and specific training is provided.

More dialogue between rural communities and local authorities: To place the local people in a better position to claim their rights, HEKS/EPER encourages dialogue between rural communities and local authorities. In this way, our Country Programme makes rural communities and authorities central to local development, thus helping to bring about greater transparency in the management of resources.

Target groups

The Haiti Country Programme supports local development in seven rural communities of Grand'Anse, which are bypassed by government services and rarely supported by other players. Target groups include households in these communities and certain parent associations, pupils, school personnel, victims of natural disasters as well as grassroots organizations of farmers and processors of agricultural produce.

Partnerships, networks, alliances, memberships

Projects are implemented directly by HEKS or in collaboration with the local partners Programme de Réhabilitation Rurale de Jérémie (PRR) and Université Nouvelle Grand'Anse (UNOGA).

Networks: In Haiti, HEKS/EPER is part of several networks for the promotion of synergies and better coordination as well as information and experience sharing. HEKS/EPER is a member of ACT Alliance and the Education Commission of the NGO association Cadre de Liaison Inter-ONG (CLIO) and is involved in the platforms for coordinating humanitarian players in Grand'Anse and dialogue between Swiss NGOs and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), both in the field and in Switzerland. HEKS/EPER is also represented in Coordination Haiti-Europe through Switzerland's Haiti Platform.

HEKS/EPER on the ground

HEKS/EPER has a Coordination Office in Jérémie, which implements and provides guidance for local projects and offers optimal assistance to local partners.

Topics and working approach

The HEKS/EPER Country Programme in Haiti fosters sustainable local development, especially by improving access to basic services, promoting higher incomes



and greater food security, upgrading rural infrastructure as well as strengthening civil society and governance. The cross-cutting issues of gender, resilience building and conflict sensitivity are considered in all projects. Currently, one HEKS/EPER priority in Haiti is to progress from mostly direct project implementation by HEKS/EPER to an expanded role for partnerships in that regard. To make local development sustainable, HEKS/EPER works on a participatory basis, with local players at the centre of its projects. HEKS/EPER strengthens local players by encouraging their visions of development and supporting civil society in claiming the rights of local people. Local authorities are taken on board in our projects so as to facilitate them in the performance of their duties.

Country:

Haiti

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