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“Filling gaps and removing traps
for sustainable resource management”

Self-organised Natural Resource Management in Burkina Faso

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Abstract

The research project “Ways out of extreme poverty, vulnerability and food insecurity” conducted by the Institute for Development and Peace at the University of Duisburg-Essen with funds from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ) aims to develop recommendations for development cooperation regarding how to reach extremely poor, vulnerable and food insecure people and to effectively improve their lives. The research approach is based on identifying good practice projects and assessing their outreach approaches, project activities, lessons learnt and above all their impact with regard to the reduction of food insecurity, vulnerability and poverty. Among the research methods are focus group discussions, wealth rankings and intensive interviews with project staff and beneficiaries.

One of the good practice projects researched by the INEF team is an initiative by the two NGOs Initiative Développement Durable (IDD) and Terra-Verde in Burkina Faso. The two NGOs put great emphasis on informing and sensitising smallholder farmers for the need for sustainable resource management and on building their self-help capacity to plan, organise and implement these activities themselves. With the assistance of the project, farmers mainly build stone bunds along contour lines for better rainwater infiltration in their fields. This activity alone allows farmers to significantly increase their yields. In addition, it turns barren land into cultivable fields. The research team found the project to be one of the good practice examples to sustainably overcome hunger, malnutrition and poverty. Research results point to the conclusion that farmers are willing and able to actively engage in sustainable natural resource management if they are properly informed about the consequences of continuing to maintain the status as compared to the benefits of applying stone bunds and other soil and water conservation measures.

Keywords: Burkina Faso, natural resource management, soil fertility, stone bunds