

Village description

The village lies on the bank of a river. Parts of the village lie on its flood plains other parts are a bit removed from the river and a bit elevated. There are around 300 families in the village. Most households in the community are depending on their own agriculture for their nutrition. The subsistence farmers are growing mainly Sorghum and Corn. Very few other crops are grown, and few would know how to grow anything else, yet some own cattle, chicken, or goats, too. Most fields lie low along and close to the river.

Road conditions are decent, in the dry season at least. During the rainy season the mostly dirt roads can be very hard to navigate, but you are rarely totally cut off. The main entrance into the village remains open even during the flood, any other entry or exit ways are blocked, however and crossing the river may be difficult. The brick school building is relatively new and the best built structure around. Located on a small hill, it has a generator and some spare rooms which are not really used at the moment. Though a school exists, not all children attend it and those that do, do not go everyday as they might be needed at home or in the field. There is a well in the village and a few handpumps, but neither are covered, elevated, or in any way protected from contamination.

Though you do not have public transport or a bank in your village, there is a landline which connects to a handful of houses and mobile signal coverage is decent.

One of the facilities that you do miss is a good health clinic. You have a nurse, but she doesn't have much equipment or a separate place to treat her patients. Anything remotely serious is difficult for her to treat with the limited means available to her.

There is no government office or official in the village, other than your village head and council, but in the next bigger village there is one. Sometimes they come and visit and if need be, you can get there, too. But it takes 3-4 hours to get there on foot. Generally, the government helps you with your petitions and sometimes they provide funding if a flood has been particularly bad. Though you have a council, it was not able to provide any kind of leadership during past floods, not to mention the absent government. The village head did a decent job leading during the last flooding, but two men from the village really took charge when the flood came last time. People seemed to be happy about their decision-making and heeded their leadership.

The older people in the village remember that there were more trees in the village when they were younger and along the river vegetation has been decreasing in the last few decades. They also remember that the area has always experienced floods, though they did not use to come as often as they come now, and not this

badly either. While 50 years ago the river would flood maybe every 5 years, if that, the floods no occur almost every year. After every flood you have to rebuild many houses, lose a lot of crops, and many people get sick, and some die. The last flood saw 5 die, 13 injured, and 36 getting sick shortly after. The worst part is, that while you know during what time of the year floods are most likely to occur, they still come surprisingly with hardly any warning for you.

Reconstruction does not only take a lot of time but consume most savings in the village. Whenever there is a flood now, you are dependent on support from the outside. If outside aid does not come, many of you go hungry for a long time.

