



One Health: Connecting Humans, Animals and the Environment

Video Transcript

Cattle and children: a story about nomads

[Jakob Zinsstag]: Welcome to the second week of the course. You will learn methods how doctors, veterinarians, and other professionals can work together in an efficient way to achieve more than they could achieve alone. My own experience started during the work with mobile pastoralists. These are livestock farmers who move around with their cattle, sheep, goat, and camels in search for fodder and water. Mostly they are located in semiarid areas in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. They have virtually no access to health care because of their mobile lifestyle. A crucial question was how to provide health care to them. Together with our Chadian partners, we created a team consisting of doctors, veterinarians, microbiologists, and geographers.

We studied both the health of people and of their animals at the same time. To our surprise, we found that more cattle were vaccinated than children and women. No child had received the usual childhood vaccinations completely. We then met with the Chadian health and veterinary authorities, together with communities, to discuss these topics. In this situation, it was essential to engage with the stakeholders. As a solution, we created joint teams out of veterinarians and doctors. When veterinarians went out to vaccinate livestock, they took along public-health nurses who could vaccinate children and women and provide quality drugs and health education. In this way, we made preventive health services available to people who would have otherwise no access to it.

And that clearly created an added value to a closer cooperation between doctors and veterinarians. Due to the shared transportation of nurses, veterinarians and vaccines, an amount of money has been saved. Esther Schelling and her collaborators quantified the financial savings by monitoring the costs of the joint service. When subtracting this from the cost of a separate human and animal vaccination service, you see the savings that can be achieved from One Health approaches. In this study, we saved 15% against the costs of a separate service provision. We could also have estimated the incremental amount of animal and human lives that have been saved due to that approach, but this is much more time-consuming.

We will show you how to estimate incremental health benefits later. This example shows a fundamental principle of One Health methods. By subtracting shared approaches from divided ones, One Health benefits in terms of better health of humans and animals, in financial savings, environmental services, and reduced time to detection of diseases.