

ORGANISATION OF HEALTH COOPERATIVES IN ETHIOPIA



PHOTO: AMBO COLLEGE

AUC clinic in Ambo, Ethiopia

Background

Ethiopia has three popular forms of cooperatives: agricultural cooperatives, cooperative unions and savings and credit cooperatives.

Furthermore, there are other smaller types of cooperatives such as dairy, fishery, irrigation and housing cooperatives.

Ethiopia is severely affected by HIV/AIDS and by other health issues such as malaria, malnutrition, child mortality. Most of these health issues need to be addressed at early stages. Preventive health care has therefore become an important measure but due to a shortage of funds, the government cannot reach all corners of the country.

Innovative cooperatives such as health cooperatives can generate a new stride in the health care field, by providing health services to the community.

Project summary

The project intends to form a health cooperative in Ambo Woreda. It is expected to benefit the weaker sections of the community and the rural population around Ambo Woreda by providing basic medical facilities and introduce the concept of sanitation and a clean environment.

First and foremost, members of the Department of Cooperatives and the Ambo University College will undertake a feasibility study on the proposed health project including a need assessment and a baseline survey. The results of this study will impact on the project's organisation measures.

Gender mainstreaming will be part of the implementation strategy where women will be encouraged to take on membership and managerial leadership.

A key stage in the implementation of this project is a field trip to Benin or India where health cooperatives function successfully. Based on the experience of this trip, lessons will be translated to suit the needs and conditions in Ethiopia, and Ambo in particular.

A part of the work plan includes the building of infrastructure, in addition to the existing infrastructure available. For the medical facilities provided by the proposed health cooperative, service charges will be fixed depending on the nature of the ailment. First an out patients department will be set up and at a later stage some beds will be made available in the inpatient ward.

The board of directors and experts will monitor and evaluate the progress of the activities on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis.



Partners

The organizations involved in this project are the Department of Cooperatives, Ambo University College and government health centres at Woreda, Zonal, Regional and Federal levels.

- Ambo University College is the oldest Agricultural college in Ethiopia. The college has over 25 departments divided into 7 faculties.
- The department of cooperatives was recently given the status of School of Cooperative Studies by the Federal Ministry of Education; it offers undergraduate courses in cooperation with two main streams: Cooperative Management and Cooperative Accounting where approximately 120 students are admitted every year.
- The relevant health centres of governments are Woreda Health Centre/Hospital and Zonal Health Centre/Hospital, located in Ambo city. They are easily approachable and would be ready to extend their services on a voluntary basis. The project will involve the Cooperative Promotion Bureaus in Woreda and Zonal, and at Regional and Federal levels.

Beneficiaries

The project beneficiaries will primarily be the members of the proposed health cooperatives. Among the non-members, priority will be given to HIV/AIDS patients, followed by pregnant women, children and disabled persons. To start with services provided will only include diagnosis, prescription, counselling and treatment. Operations and related medical technicalities will be undertaken at a later stage. Community health care like malaria control and supplying preventive

medicines will be undertaken in collaboration with the government health departments.

Expected achievements

The ultimate goal is will be to create a healthy and disease free community by promoting the approach “prevention is better than cure”, diagnosing diseases, giving medical treatment and keeping a clean environment.

Expected achievements are:

- Awareness of major diseases control;
- Introducing prevention control measures on diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria, infant mortality, etc;
- Taking care of pregnant women and educating them on safe childbirth and new born baby diets;
- Supporting the disabled around the area;
- Members may benefit from certain medical tests like routine check up, scanning and X-ray, etc. These facilities are costly in the open market and could be established by the proposed health cooperative;
- Undertaking regular health campaigns among the villagers around Ambo Woreda;
- Introducing the concept of routine sanitation to the public, resulting in a cleaner environment;
- Introducing gender mainstreaming through effective participation of women members.

Project duration & budget

Project duration: January - December 2009

Project budget: Bir 480,000 (equivalent to USD 50,000).

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ILO Office Dar es Salaam
COOP^{AFRICA}
Kazi House, Maktaba Street
P.O. Box 9212
Dar es Salaam
United Republic of Tanzania
Tel: +255.22.212.6821/24/26
Fax: +255.22.212.6627
E-mail: coopafrica@ilo.org
www.ilo.org/coopafrica

Contacts

Main person to be contacted
Name: Dr. Mitiku Tesso
Position: President, Ambo University College
Email: mitikut@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: +251-11-2362006,
+251-11-2362017
Fax: +251-11-2362037

Second person to be contacted
Name: Asst. Prof. Bekele Tassew
Position: Faculty Head
Email: bekshew@yahoo.com
Tel: +251-911-893394