

Field Visit to Mikawa Primary Health Care Unit

(the slide show attached at the end of this report provides photos and further information)

Henry Perry
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We traveled to about 1 hour from Addis Ababa to visit a PHC Unit in Mikawa. The area is beautiful flat farmland where wheat, barley, lentils, peas and fava beans are grown. We saw some cattle. Small mountains were dispersed through the area.

This PHC Unit covers a population of 31,684 people and has 9 health posts, each 10-20 km away from the central PHC center. For this population, the PHC Unit had the following staff:

33 health care providers:

- 0 medical doctors
- 2 health officers (with a BS university degree in public health)
- 2 graduate nurses
- 1 pharmacist
- 1 laboratory technologist
- 2 midwives
- 6 diploma nurses
- 2 laboratory technicians
- 2 urban health extension workers
- 15 rural health extension workers

11 supporting staff: (manager, financial staff, guard, cleaner, etc.)

The central health center saw ambulatory patients, had 5 beds (which were usually empty), and delivered babies. The also had offices for TB/leprosy, youth-friendly services (family life education, family planning). There are 63 patients on anti-retroviral therapy for HIV infection. Patients have to come to the central health center to obtain their medication. There are 20 patients on TB treatment. This is provided by the HEW. There also are 1-2 leprosy patients receiving treatment.

The maternity unit delivered about 60 deliveries a month, and each woman who delivered there participated in a coffee ceremony. The Health Development Army volunteers are all

engaged in promoting facility deliveries. At this PHU we were told that all deliveries took place in the PHC center. Every household in the population is expected each year to give the equivalent of \$1 and 1kg of grain (which is sold to obtain cash) to support women at the time of delivery when they come to the PHC center.

The staff members from the health center go out to their assigned communities once a week for education and to discuss problems. They use a motorcycle. The HEWs walk to the health center once a month for their routine meeting with the PHC staff.

The kebele is the lowest administrative unit in the government. Above it is the woreda (district). There is a Kebele Command Post that has representatives of the Health Extension Workers, of education, and of women's affairs. There is also a Health Center Command Post.

The woreda which contains the Mikawa PHU also contains 3 other Primary Health Care Units. Most woredas have a hospital, but the patients in this woreda are referred to Addis Ababa for hospital care.

After visiting the health center, we travelled with some health center staff to a village where there is a health post. There we met two HEWs. One had been working for 8 years there as an HEW and the other 4 years. They told us that they each had about 300 households for which they are responsible, and they visit each household twice a month (with more frequent visits to pregnant women or mothers of small children or sick children). They alternate work days in the health post and doing home visits. When one HEW is doing home visits, the other is seeing patients in the health post. They usually have 20 patients a day coming to the health post. (That means that, they spend 5 days every two weeks visiting homes. Thus, in order to visit 300 households every 2 weeks they would have to visit 60 households a day. This does not seem possible.)

The HEWs are from the local area, and they each work 8 hours a day, 5 days a week. They told us, "We enjoy our work but we are too busy and are underpaid." They said the people respect us. They register births and deaths, and they maintain a family health folder at the health post for each family in their catchment area. They said they are too busy with their work, though they like it. They want more training, opportunities for career advancement, and more salary.

Regarding the Health Development Army (HDA) program, they said that they meet with the Health Development Army volunteers every week, and each HDA volunteer has a women's group they meet with weekly.