The First Mile:

The Potential for Community-Based Health Cooperatives in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Outline

- Persistence of serious health problems in Sub-Saharan Africa
- 2. Underlying cause of high mortality
- 3. Key features of a cooperative health care program in Kenya
- 4. Recommendations
- 5. Conclusion

Persistent Health Problems

Sub-Saharan Africa has the most serious health problems in the world:

- Highest child mortality rate
- Highest maternal mortality rate
- Highest incidence of HIV-AIDS
- Lowest median income

Underlying Cause of High Mortality

- Health care delivery systems don't reach those most in need of health services – over 400 million rural residents.
- Often referred to as the "last mile" problem
- The potential for community-based health cooperatives to be the "first mile" solution

Key Features of a Cooperative Health Program in Kenya

- 1. Efficient organizational structure
- 2. Systematic development process
- 3. Low cost per village
- 4. Rapid mobilization
- 5. Village-led approach
- 6. Autonomous and democratically-run local organizations
- 7. Village-based, volunteer community health workers

Key Features of Cooperative Health Program in Kenya

- 8. Health plans and priorities determined by villagers
- 9. Implementation of health plans led by villagers
- 10. Additional community-based organizations
- 11. Multi-village coordinating organizations
- 12. Positive health and family planning outcomes
- 13. Sustainability
- 14. Adaptability

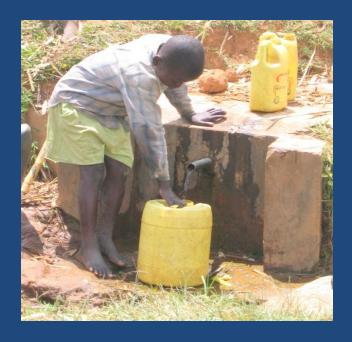
Results: Improved Treatment

- Trained community
 health workers in every
 village
- Improved access to medical supplies
- Links to health care system



Results: Improved Prevention

- Water sanitation
- Maternal and other health education groups
- Mosquito controls





Results: Economic Development

- Poverty: biggest health problem
- Cooperatives and assistance with individual business activities a major part of the solution





Recommended Next Steps

- 1. Continue the cooperative health program in Kenya
- 2. Implement the model in other Sub-Saharan African countries.
- 3. Rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the model.

Conclusion

Health researchers estimate that millions of children and adults die each year in Sub-Saharan Africa of health problems that could be prevented or treated easily and inexpensively.

Village-based co-ops have the potential to be a key part of a "first mile" health delivery strategy that could be put in place quickly and on a broad scale to greatly reduce these needless deaths.