

An excerpt from:

*Better Health & Social Care: How are Co-ops & Mutuels Boosting Innovation & Access Worldwide?*

An International survey of co-ops and mutuals at work in the health and social care sector (CMHSC14)

Volume 2: National Cases

Copyright © 2014 LPS Productions

Montréal, Québec, Canada

For the research framework, the analysis of the national cases, and other research components, including a description of the research team members, refer to Volume 1: Report.

For information regarding reproduction and distribution of the contents contact the editor and research leader:

Jean-Pierre Girard

LPS Productions

205 Chemin de la Côte Sainte-Catherine, #902

Montréal, Québec H2V 2A9

Canada

[info@productionslps.com](mailto:info@productionslps.com)

URL <http://www.productionslps.com>

## HEALTH SYSTEM

Panama has had a policy of “Health for All” since 1969 and is striving to provide universal health care. Those who have no social protection the Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud, MINSA) covers through its public health facilities (MINSA clinics and hospitals), funded through general taxes. The Social Security Institute (Caja de Seguro Social, CSS) covers formal workers and is financed through employer and employee contributions. The private sector provides health care services to those who are capable of paying for these services either out-of-pocket or through private health insurance. According to the World Health Organization, in 2011 public health services accounted for 67% of total health care costs, 27% were out-of-pocket expenses, and 6% were covered through private health insurance.<sup>1</sup> Cooperatives are part of the private health care system.

The Autonomous Cooperative Institute of Panama (Instituto Panameño Autónomo Cooperativo, IPACCOOP) reports that the cooperative movement in Panama has seen growth over the last five years. Over 100 new cooperatives have been established, mainly in the multipurpose and savings and credit sectors. In the third trimester of 2013 there were 593 registered cooperatives with a total membership of 206,228 (approximately 6% of the population). That total is equally divided between men and women. The largest number of cooperatives are classified as multipurpose (208), followed by savings and credit cooperatives (169). Official statistics also exist for the following classifications: youth/school (111), transport (34), production (20), worker (10), fisheries (10), consumer (8), housing (6), service (5), production and marketing (4), marketing (4), tourism (3), and health (1).<sup>2</sup> A number of social cooperatives have been identified, although official statistics do not recognize this area of activity.

One cooperative has for its main objective the provision of health care. However, health professionals have also established multipurpose or savings and credit cooperatives. In addition, savings and credit cooperatives generally offer a number of products related to health care, including hospitalization insurance, insurance to help cover cancer treatments, and specific loans.

## HEALTH COOPERATIVES

Health cooperatives are defined as entities providing full health care to their members, beneficiaries, and third parties.<sup>3</sup> In 2013, the Institute for the Promotion of Cooperatives (Instituto Nacional de Fomento Cooperativo, INFOCOOP) identified one health cooperative, Cooperativa de Servicios y Atención en Salud (COOPASI).<sup>4</sup> COOPASI was established in 1970 as a user cooperative. In the 1990s it was reported to have approximately 300 members. By 2013, however, membership was down to 37 members.<sup>5</sup>

Population (in thousands): 3,802

Population median age (years): 27.64

Population under 15 (%): 28.65

Population over 60 (%): 10.13

Total expenditure on health as a % of Gross Domestic Product: 7.6

General government expenditure on health as a % of total government expenditure: 12.7

Private expenditure on health as a % of total expenditure: 31.4

## Health Cooperative Data (2013)<sup>6</sup>

Number of cooperatives	1
Types of cooperative	Producer
Number of members	37 (12 men, 25 women)

## SOCIAL COOPERATIVES

A number of cooperatives of and for persons with disabilities were identified in Panama. They take the forms of multipurpose, worker, and consumer cooperatives. No further information was available on the activities undertaken by these cooperatives.

IPACCOOP’s 2011 Annual Report makes reference to an agreement with the National Secretariat for Disabilities (Secretaría Nacional de Discapacidad, SENADIS) to create a fund to assist in the development of cooperatives of or for persons with disabilities (Fondo de Desarrollo para Personas con Discapacidad y Sus Familias, FONDECOOPEDIS). The beneficiaries of the fund are both

persons with disabilities and their families and friends. Nine cooperatives received support in 2011:<sup>7</sup>

- Cooperativa de Servicios Múltiples San Judas Tadeo, R.L.
- Cooperativa de Servicios Múltiples Manos Diligentes R.L. (24 members<sup>8</sup>)
- Cooperativa de Servicios Múltiples Unidos por la Diversidad, R.L.
- Cooperativa de Trabajo Sordos Santa Librada, R.L.
- Cooperativa de Servicios Múltiples Padres, Personas con Discapacidad y Amigos de Personas con Discapacidad de Chiriquí, R.L.
- Cooperativa de Consumo de Padres, Amigos y Discapacitados del Distrito de Barú, R.L.
- Cooperativa de Consumo Pedro Pablo Ortega del Discapacitado, R.L.
- Cooperativa de Servicios Múltiples de Personas con Discapacidad Familiares y Amigos de Herrera, R.L.
- Cooperativa de Servicios de Personas con Discapacidad Familiares y Amigos de Bocas Del Toro, R.L.

**Social Cooperative Data (2013)**

<b>Number of cooperatives</b>	9
Types of cooperative	User, Producer
<b>Number of members</b>	20 (for Cooperativa de Servicios Múltiples Manos Diligentes R.L. <sup>9</sup> )

**SAVINGS & CREDIT COOPERATIVES**

Savings and credit cooperatives offer loans to defray health expenses, and offer insurance products for hospitalization and accident-related health care. For example, one of the largest savings and credit cooperatives is Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito, “El Educador”, R.L, with a membership of over 60,000 education professionals. It offers insurance plans for hospitalization and accident (covering health-related costs) and a specific insurance plan to cover cancer treatments.<sup>10</sup> Another large savings and credit cooperative, Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito San Antonio, R.L. (CACSA) provides group health insurance plans for its 39,400 members.<sup>11</sup>

**OTHER COOPERATIVES**

Cooperativa de Servicios Múltiples de Profesionales de Panamá R.L is a multipurpose cooperative serving 9,148 health professionals and 1,813 associate members or “terceros” (members of the family of a principal cooperative member).<sup>12</sup> It provides a variety of financial products, including hospitalization and cancer treatment insurance.<sup>13</sup>

**MUTUALS**

At least one mutual insurance company, Catholic Mutual, offers health insurance coverage (medical and dental) and care to Panamanians. Through national networks of providers, Catholic Mutual provides such services to a number of countries in the region.<sup>14</sup>

**SOURCES**

<sup>1</sup> Valverde, Zelibeth. 2013. *Situación de Salud de Panamá 2013*. Ministerio de Salud, Panama. Retrieved March 15, 2014 ([http://www.minsa.gob.pa/sites/default/files/publicaciones/situacion\\_de\\_salud\\_panama\\_2013\\_0.pdf](http://www.minsa.gob.pa/sites/default/files/publicaciones/situacion_de_salud_panama_2013_0.pdf)).

<sup>2</sup> Instituto Panameño Autónomo Cooperativo. 2014. “Cooperativas activas en República de Panamá según tipo al tercer trimestre del 2013.” Retrieved March 16, 2014 (<http://www.ipacoop.gob.pa/new/images/pdf/estadisticas/GRAFICAPORTIPO2013.pdf>).

<sup>3</sup> Ministerio de Economía et Finanzas. 2001. “Decreto Ejecutivo No 137 del 5 de noviembre del 2001 por lo cual se Reglamenta la Ley 107 del 1 de Mayo del 1997.” Retrieved March 15, 2014 ([http://www.ipacoop.gob.pa/site/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/decreto\\_137.pdf](http://www.ipacoop.gob.pa/site/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/decreto_137.pdf)).

<sup>4</sup> Instituto Panameño Autónomo Cooperativo. 2013a. “Estadísticas cooperativas 2013.” Retrieved March 16, 2014 (<http://www.ipacoop.gob.pa/new/images/pdf/103.pdf>).

<sup>5</sup> Efforts made to contact COOPASI for clarification met with no success.

<sup>6</sup> Instituto Panameño Autónomo Cooperativo. 2013b. “Cuadro de asociados hábiles en la república de panamá por tipo de cooperativa según provincia y sexo al tercer trimestre del 2013.” Retrieved March 18, 2014 (<http://www.ipacoop.gob.pa/new/images/pdf/estadisticas/CUADROASOCIADOS2013.pdf>).

<sup>7</sup> Instituto Panameño Autónomo Cooperativo. 2012. *Memoria Annual 2011*. Retrieved March 18, 2014 (<http://www.ipacoop.gob.pa/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/IPACOOOP-MEMORIA-baja.pdf>).

<sup>8</sup> Instituto Panameño Autónomo Cooperativo. 2009. “En Coclé – Cooperativa integrada por personas con discapacidad recibe financiamiento.” Webpage. Retrieved March 18, 2014 (<http://www.ipacoop.gob.pa/site/en-cocle-cooperativa-integrada-por-personas-con-discapacidad-recibe-financiamiento.html>).

<sup>9</sup> Gobierno de Panama. 2013. “Plan de Negocio: Desarrollo agroindustrial como alternativa de conservación ambiental - Cooperativa de Servicios Múltiples Manos Diligentes R.L. 2013.” Retrieved March 24, 2014 (<http://www.cbmap.org/documentos/COOP%20MANOS%20DILIGENTES%20VALI DADO.pdf>).

<sup>10</sup> Coopeduc. 2014. “Beneficios: Fondo de Solidaridad.” Webpage. Retrieved March 24, 2014 (<http://www.coopeduc.com/bienestarsocial.html>).

<sup>11</sup> Cooperativa de Ahorro y Crédito San Antonio. 2014. “Seguros Contratados.” Webpage. Retrieved March 24, 2014 (<http://www.cacsa.com.pa/index.php/productoservicio/oservicio/seguros-contratados>).

<sup>12</sup> Cooperativa Profesionales . 2014a. “2013 Informe Anual: Ejercicio Socioeconómica.” Retrieved March 24, 2014 ([http://www.coopprofesionales.com.pa/sites/default/files/memoria\\_2013-webdesc.pdf](http://www.coopprofesionales.com.pa/sites/default/files/memoria_2013-webdesc.pdf)).

<sup>13</sup> Cooperativa Profesionales. 2014b. “Seguros.” Retrieved March 24, 2014 (<http://www.coopprofesionales.com.pa/content/seguros>).

<sup>14</sup> Mutual Catolica. 2014. Website. Retrieved March 26, 2014 (<http://mutualcatolica.com/>).