Exploring the potential of cooperatives to advance Universal Health Coverage and Sustainable Development Goals in Cameroon and Kenya: Step 2

From now to May 2019, the second phase of the project is underway to assess the potential of cooperatives in Kenya and Cameroon to advance Universal Health Coverage and Sustainable Development Goals. The project seeks to validate the hypothesis that cooperatives or other types of member-based organization working in diverse fields (e.g., financial services or even the agricultural sector) are successfully extending their services into the health field, as several cases in Central and South America clearly demonstrate. The chosen approach may be in terms both of care service provision and health promotion.

This bilingual project, carried out in French in Cameroon and in English in Kenya, promises to be very innovative. It is underpinned both by local partnerships in these two countries and by north-south partnerships. Funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the project draws upon a wide range of partners: the Cooperatives Unit of the International Labour Organization, the Association de soutien aux centres de recherches, d’enseignements et de soins (a Geneva-based NGO), NorWest Co-op Community Health (Winnipeg, Canada), ConfederazioneSanità (Rome, Italy), the Centre International de Recherche, de l’Enseignement et des Soins (an NPO in Akonolinga, Cameroon), the Alliance for Health Promotion/Kenya (an NGO based in Kitale), the Réseau Éducation et solidarité (an NGO based in Paris), and LPS Productions (Montreal).

Directed by Jean-Pierre Girard, an international consultant in collective entrepreneurship, the task force includes Willy Tadjudje, a specialist in African cooperative and mutual law, and Veronica Shiroya, a doctoral student at the Institute of Public Health (Heidelberg University, Germany). Rounding off the team in terms of social media and communications are Geneviève Morand and Don McNair.

The project will unfold in close collaboration with another one financed by the SDC, the assessment of a virtual platform set up under the authority of the International Health Cooperative Organization (IHCO) and with the participation of the Espriu Foundation (Barcelona, Spain). In brief, this project may enable us to showcase the expertise, know-how, and resources of existing health cooperatives, which then (for example) could be approached by the promoters of new health cooperatives.