



Accredited Drug Dispensing Outlets in Tanzania: Enhancing the Economic Opportunities for Women in Rural Areas

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In 2003, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and Management Sciences for Health (MSH) launched the accredited drug dispensing outlet (ADDO) program or *Duka la Dawa Muhimu* (Swahili for “essential drug shop”) to improve access to quality medicines and pharmaceutical services in retail drug outlets. The innovative pharmaceutical dispensing program, which includes standardized training, government accreditation and regulation, economic incentives, and supervision, is expanding the human resource base for pharmaceutical services by creating a new class of health care provider to serve mostly rural communities. To achieve its goal, the ADDO program works closely with ADDO owners and dispensers to assure they are knowledgeable and confident in their skills.

In addition to improving pharmaceutical services, the ADDO program provides secure job opportunities for rural women as outlet owners and as licensed drug dispensers. As of October 2007, women comprised 24 percent of ADDO owners in Morogoro region (130/553) and 38 percent in Ruvuma region (79/210). In both regions, about 90 percent of the 1,148 licensed dispensers are women. In addition, the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) provides business training and support, such as linking ADDO owners with the National Microfinancing Bank (NMB); by May 2007, 102 owners in Morogoro had secured loans worth 62,000 U.S. dollars to improve their businesses. Female ADDO owners also benefit from the MEDA business skills training and link to NMB support

The U.S. Agency for International Development, through its Rational Pharmaceutical Management Plus Program, is supporting an ADDO program expansion. The government’s strategy to roll out the ADDO program nationwide promises to provide greater economic opportunities for women,

especially those in rural areas who may have few options to achieve financial stability, and to contribute to the government’s growth and poverty reduction strategy.



“By opening a *Duka La Dawa Muhimu*, I have improved my income, and I can now help my family by paying for my nieces’ and nephews’ school fees.”

—Frieda Komba, ADDO owner in Namtumbo