



## Newsletter n. 0 – April 2010

### CoBaSys - Community Based System in HIV treatment

Dear readers,

It's with great pleasure that we publish the first issue of the CoBaSys project newsletter.

The foundations of the project were laid during a seminar organized in May 2008 by the University of Bologna with the title: *HIV/AIDS, Poverty and Democracy in Africa*. Following the seminar, a regional network of African partners was built in order to present a project proposal to the [ACP Science and Technology Programme](#) with the overall objective to **strengthen the integration of the involved countries into the European science and technology (S&T) framework**, focusing on programmes for quality health care with special attention to community based and patient-centred approaches to HIV treatment.

The approved project, involving a strategic group of African and European partners – University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, University of Bologna, University of Manchester, University of Helsinki, University of Malawi, Research for Equity And Community Health Trust (Malawi), Training and Research Support Centre (Zimbabwe), University Eduardo Mondlane (Mozambique), University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), University of Botswana and University of Namibia - started in November 2009.

The **main specific objective** of the CoBaSys project is the development of a **stable cooperative network promoting a quality health care system in the field of HIV**

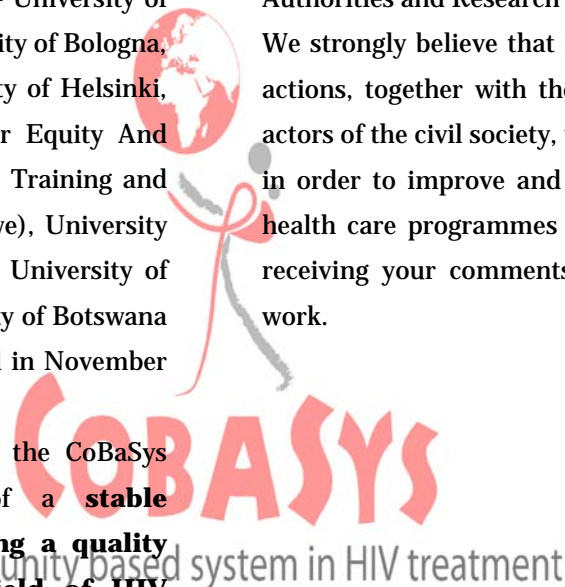
**treatment**. In this respect the project focuses mainly on a *community-based approach* and *participatory methods*, that will be used not only at community level but also at a wider regional level. In the initial stage, a series of focus groups will be implemented at local level in order to identify and analyse best practices in HIV/AIDS treatment.

Best practices will be further discussed in stakeholder fora and interregional meetings that have the main objective of building a stable UE-Africa Network on HIV/AIDS issues.

We hope that the project outputs will contribute to develop innovative approaches in HIV/AIDS treatment, based on an empowered role of the communities involved and with the cooperation among Community Based Organizations, Local Authorities and Research Organizations.

We strongly believe that multilevel and multitask actions, together with the involvement of all the actors of the civil society, will be the successful key in order to improve and support HIV/AIDS and health care programmes and we look forward to receiving your comments and feedbacks on our work.

Giovanni Guaraldi  
CoBaSys Director



## **Cobays Kick-off meeting**

The CoBaSys kickoff meeting was held in Lilongwe, Malawi, on 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> February 2010. All the CoBaSys partners took part to the kickoff meeting. The opening speech was given by Giovanni Guaraldi, the CoBaSys coordinator, who presented a [project overview](#) and described the main aims and phases of CoBaSys project. All project partners were then asked to introduce the different work packages they are in charge of coordinating. The activities and actions of each work package were thoughtfully examined and debated by the participants. The project associate partners provided information on the actions and activities they will take part to. The discussion among the partners focused on a number of relevant issues, such as the coordination of the national, regional and international initiatives to be implemented (focus groups, national stakeholder fora, and interregional fora), the timetable of the CoBaSys actions, the financial regulations of the project, and the sharing of information. During the closing session the partners nominated the members of the steering committees and the scientific committee of the CoBaSys project.

*Arrigo Pallotti*



**CoBaSys Kick-off meeting**

## **CoBaSys Round Table**

A public round table, jointly organized by the University of Malawi and Reach Trust Malawi, was held at the Lilongwe Hotel on 10 February 2010. The round table, moderated by Windford Masanjala of the University of Malawi, aimed at introducing the purposes of the CoBaSys project by discussing relevant issues with various stakeholders involved with HIV/AIDS in Malawi. The discussion focused on projects and experiences of HIV/AIDS community-based health care in Malawi. A very useful discussion arose from the round table with the active involvement of all the partners involved in the CoBaSys project

A more detailed presentation of the kickoff meeting and of the roundtable is available on [CoBaSys website](#).

*Mario Zamponi*



**CoBaSys Roundtable**

## Introducing the CoBaSys partners

### University of Modena and Reggio Emilia - University Centre for Cooperation for Development (UNIMORE-CUSCOS), Italy

The [University Centre for Cooperation for Development](#) is an interdepartmental and multidisciplinary centre that includes experiences on development cooperation issues from different departments (Medicine, Economics, Law and Human Sciences). The CUSCOS is a member of the Italian network of University Centres for Development Cooperation.

In the field of Education CUSCOS promotes a Master of Science in International Cooperation offering a multidisciplinary training with 3 specializations in Emergency, Disability and Project Management. In the field of international cooperation the Centre collaborates with local, regional and national NGOs together with local Municipalities and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The [University of Modena and Reggio Emilia](#), with the CUSCOS, is the CoBaSys project coordinator and is therefore in charge of the Work Package (WP) 1 – Coordination and Management Activity, whose main objectives are the management of the budget, the monitoring of the project implementation, and the scientific coordination of partners' activities in accordance with the ACP Secretariat guidelines.

### University of Bologna – Department of Politics, Institutions, History (Centre of Historical and Political Studies on Africa and the Middle East) (UNIBO), Italy

The team at the [Department of Politics, Institutions, History](#) of the [University of Bologna](#) is based at the [Centre of Historical and Political Studies on Africa and the Middle East](#), which has

the main aim to promote research about Africa and the Middle East within political sciences, contemporary political and social institutions, development issues.

The Centre has been officially created in December 2006 and is the result of years of academic activities and researches coordinated by the Chair of History and Institutions of Afro-Asian Countries within the Department of Politics, Institutions, History. Activities of the Centre include research, networking initiatives with other Centres, organization of conferences, workshops, and seminars, realization and promotion of scientific publications. Its members are professors, lecturers and young researchers with a consolidated experience in interdisciplinary research.

UNIBO, with the Departmental Centre of Historical and Political Studies on Africa and the Middle East, manages the WP7 – Dissemination whose main objectives are: raising the awareness on Project activity among all the stakeholders; organizing an effective communication strategy of the project outcomes particularly aimed at relevant actors outside the project consortium; facilitate collaborative exchange and knowledge transfer between the project partners and associates.

### University of Manchester - Institute for Development Policy and Management (IDPM), UK

The team at the [University of Manchester](#), based at the [Institute for Development Policy and Management](#) (IDPM), comes from a multidisciplinary cluster of academics in the field of international development. IDPM was set up more than 50 years ago to dedicate research and teaching to the area of international development. It is now the largest such group in the UK, with leading researchers in many fields of international



development. Each of the staff of the University of Manchester team has been previously involved in monitoring and evaluation of community livelihoods and capacity building initiatives. This is a core aspect of professional practice for the group who also teach development management and conduct consultancies with a range of governmental and non-governmental advisors.

The University of Manchester, with IDPM, is the coordinator of the WP6 – Internal Monitoring and Quality Control for the overall project and its component parts. To achieve holistic quality control they plan to verify the progress of the project activities by collecting data from partners; visiting pilot areas; and by developing an evaluative framework against a range of criteria and observable indicators. They have also planned specific tasks to encourage capacity building of stakeholders, and to overview ethical and gender issues to ensure that the research and advocacy practice of the project is of the highest standard in these areas.

### **University of Helsinki – Department of Social Studies, Population Research Unit (UH), Finland**

The [Population Research Unit](#) (PRU) is a section of the Discipline of Sociology, [Department of Social Studies](#), at the [University of Helsinki](#) in Finland. The Population Research Unit is a research oriented group producing more than 30 international peer reviewed scientific publications annually, often in cooperation with different international partners. One of the research themes of the Population Research Unit is demographic research in Africa. The research team concentrating on population studies in Africa is a multidisciplinary research group and consists of researchers from the Discipline of Sociology, University of Helsinki and the Department of Geographical and Historical Studies, University of

Eastern Finland. Since its beginning in the early 1990s, this research team has together with international partners conducted several research projects on e.g. social and demographic consequences of HIV-epidemic in northern Namibia and sexual and reproductive health and rights in southern Africa.

Within the project, the first task of the University of Helsinki team was to build up the CoBaSys web site and to keep it updated. Furthermore, the University of Helsinki team will participate in the work of all the Work Packages of the CoBaSys project.

### **University of Malawi – Department of Economics (UNIMA), Malawi**

The [Department of Economics](#) is one of the five departments within the faculty of Social Science at [Chancellor College](#), University of Malawi and, over the years, has established itself as a reputable academic department for the training of economists in the country. The Department currently has a teaching staff of 15 and it continuously associates with its former staff members, who have assumed important positions in international institutions, public service and the private sector. The Department was instrumental in the setting up of the secretariat of the [Economics Association of Malawi \(ECAMA\)](#). Through its involvement in various research, consultancy and other projects, and with various forms of donor support, the Department has acquired adequate computing and communication facilities. The available human and material resources have permitted the Department to emerge as an excellent performer in teaching, undertaking academic and applied research, as well as providing consultancy and advisory services to government, multilateral agencies and the private sector.



Within the CoBaSys project UNIMA, with the Department of Economics, has the task of facilitating the researchers of different WPs that will carry out the established activities in Malawi. UoM has also hosted the project kick-off meeting and the roundtable in February 2010.

### **Research for Equity and Community Health Trust (REACH Trust), Malawi**

The [REACH Trust](#) is an independent research organization with a consolidated focus on research on HIV, TB, malaria and health systems. Aiming to promote equity in health for the poor and vulnerable populations in Malawi and to influence policy and service delivery at national level, REACH Trust has been conducting research using different methodological approaches to identify challenges and facilitators to accessing health services, including access to HIV prevention, treatment care and support amongst different population groups. The Trust has experience in implementing community based interventions working with community health workers and local community based organisations to promote access to TB and HIV services in Malawi. The REACH Trust is a key member of the [Regional Network on Equity in Health in Eastern and Southern Africa](#) (EQUINET), a network of professionals, civil society members, policy makers, state officials and others within the region who have come together as an equity catalyst, to promote and realise shared values of equity and social justice in health. REACH Trust is in charge of the WP3 – Model of Community-Based Care Systems, which aim is to support local stakeholders advocacy in promoting an innovative, community-based approach to Health Care Systems in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

### **Training and Research Support Centre (TARSC), Zimbabwe**

#### [Training and Research Support Centre](#) (TARSC)

Zimbabwe is a non profit organisation providing training, research and support services for social and economic development in East and Southern Africa by developing social and organisational capacities within organisations interacting with communities, the state and private sector on areas of social policy and social development. In particular, TARSC provides technical support, mentoring, cadreship building and organizational development to a range of membership based civil society organizations. Their work covers various areas of social and economic development, particularly in health, but also including work on gender, labour and employment, social security, food security, environment, gender and organisational development. In particular, TARSC work in health is driven by an underlying understanding of health as a right, an obligation of the state, and that people, not buildings or medicines, are the core of the health system. TARSC has been carrying out research, training and policy support on a range of areas regarding health and health systems development within ESA, particularly through its role as co-coordinator of the Regional Network for Equity in Health in East and Southern Africa (EQUINET). Within the CoBaSys project, TARSC is responsible of the WP2 – Start Up of the Local Focus Groups, which aims to create stable cooperation at the local level through the implementation of a Participatory Research and Action programme (PRA) within the target areas consisting of the *identification and review* of current experiences, perceptions, determinants and proposals for intervention in the provision and uptake of community-based, patient-centred treatment for HIV and AIDS.



**University Eduardo Mondlane,  
Department of Archaeology and  
Anthropology (UEM), Mozambique**

The [Department of Archaeology and Anthropology](#) is based in the Faculty of Arts and Social Studies of [University Eduardo Mondlane](#), in Maputo, Mozambique. The staff of the Department has a long experience of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research, in particular in the following areas that are directly related to the CoBaSys project: rural and urban poverty, public health systems, sexuality, HIV/AIDS, gender relations. The Department has carried out specific research regarding access to health systems of vulnerable groups and capacity building of health personnel. In addition, it has analysed the role of stigma and socio-cultural obstacles in access to testing and counseling.

Research activities of the Department, often carried out in collaboration with different national and international institutions, are directed towards supporting institutional actors and national and international organizations in a better and thorough understanding of the Mozambican society.

Within the CoBaSys project, UEM is responsible for the management of WP4 – Setting up of Stakeholder Fora. This action will be carried out at regional level in order to define policies promoting community-based quality health care for HIV/AIDS and to enhance 'collective responsibility' and ownership of interventions by all stakeholders. The Stakeholder Forums will constitute the basis for future cooperation at inter-regional and international level.

**University of Dar es Salaam, Department  
of Political Science and Public  
Administration (UDSM), Tanzania**

The [Department of Political Science and Public Administration](#) is one of the oldest Departments

in the [University of Dar es Salaam](#), having been established as an Institute of Public Administration in 1964 (the current University was a college of the University of East Africa). It started with only three lecturers, all of whom were foreigners. Now the Department is one of the largest at the University having hosted the Philosophy Unit, adding 6 more members to its 30 strong academic members of staff. All staff are now Tanzanian, except one. Occasionally there are foreign scholars attached to the Department on different linkage arrangements. The Department has a long experience of coordination of research projects, including some funded by DANIDA, Ford Foundation, Carnegie, Rockefeller Foundation, DFID. Moreover, it hosts one of the biggest projects on campus – The Research for Education and Democracy in Tanzania (REDET), which has been running from 1992 to date.

Within the CoBaSys project UDSM, with the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, has the task of facilitating the researchers of different WPs that will carry out the established activities in Tanzania. UDSM will also host the final conference to be held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in the second half of 2012.

**University of Botswana (UoB), Department  
of Political and Administrative Studies,  
Botswana**

[University of Botswana](#) began as a part of a larger University system known as UBBS, or the University of Bechuanaland (Botswana), Basotho land (Lesotho) and Swaziland in 1964 and became an independent University in 1982. The [Department of Political and Administrative Studies](#) involved in the CoBaSys project is a part of the Faculty of Social Sciences of this University. It offers undergraduate and Master's Degrees in Public Administration and Political Science and under the auspices of the SADC Centre for



Specialization in Public Administration and Management, Centre for Strategic Studies, and UNESCO Centre for Peace and Culture offers short term Executive Development Programmes for Senior Executive officers of the SADC Region. Within the CoBaSys project, University of Botswana, with the Department of Political and Administrative Studies, has the task of facilitating the researchers of different WPs that will carry out the established activities in Botswana and will be directly involved in the organization of stakeholder fora.

### **University of Namibia, Multidisciplinary Research Centre, Social Sciences Division (UNAM), Namibia**

The [Social Sciences Division](#) (SSD) is a functional department of the [Multidisciplinary Research Centre](#) (MRC), a specialized research unit of the [University of Namibia](#) created in 1994. The key mission of the MRC is to promote, conduct and coordinate applied and academic research and to provide advisory services to the Government of Namibia and to rural community in particular. The specific task of the SSD is to carry out basic and applied social sciences research of intellectual and material development to Namibia. The Division's research themes are structured around five intertwined and multidisciplinary thematic priorities: land reform studies, regional and local development studies, gender-based violence and equality studies, education and human resources development studies, HIV/AIDS and poverty studies and community development and policy. In particular, the SSD, together with the Department of Sociology, has carried out research on universal access to health services and integration of HIV/AIDS in the education system. The Division has long experience in international

research collaboration and currently has functional bilateral agreements with more than 15 universities and research centers in Africa and abroad. Within the CoBaSys project UNAM, with the Social Sciences Division, is the partner in charge of WP5 – Build-up of cooperative networks Europe-Africa, which aims to create a framework for inter-regional and international cooperation and to strengthen integration of the involved African countries into the European Science and Technology (S&T) framework.

The CoBaSys project has three associated partners involved in the implementation of specific activities:

### **European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG), Belgium**

[EATG](#) is a network established in 1992 at European level of nationally-based activists. It represents and defends the treatment-related interests of people living with HIV and AIDS.

### **Usokami Health Center, Tanzania**

Usokami Health Center is a rural private health facility owned by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Iringa. It's located in Mufindi District, Iringa Region, Tanzania.

### **University of Zimbabwe - Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Zimbabwe**

[IDS](#), founded in 1966, is a leading global organisation for research, teaching and communications on international development, with a specific experience in development cooperation projects that focus on how HIV/AIDS affects food security in the rural areas.

*(ed. Roberta Pellizzoli)*





**CoBaSys Partners at the Lilongwe Kick-off meeting, 9-10 February 2010**

**Upcoming event:**

**Participatory Research and Action (PRA) 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting, 22-24 April 2010, Harare, Zimbabwe**

The overall aim of the PRA Meeting is to strengthen community based systems on ART and support mechanisms that promote equity oriented primary health care systems. This event is organized by the [TARSC](#) in its role of coordinator of the WP2.

For more information on the CoBaSys Project please visit the official website:  
<http://www.cobasys.eu>

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