

Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA)

**Social Sciences for Severe Stigmatising Skin Diseases
(The 5-S Foundation) Project
Team Meeting Report**



Picture 1: 5-S Ethiopia Team. From Left to right: Kibur Engdawork (PDRF), Addisu Tsegaye (PhD student), Dereje Wonde (PhD student), Getnet Tadele (Co-I), Garedew Yilma (project coordinator), Tsgeanesh Mulugeta (PhD student at AAU and part of PE team) and Alazar Emiru (Finance officer)

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OSSREA, Addis Ababa

I. Introduction

The 5-S foundation project-Ethiopia held a one-day team meeting on 24th of August 2020 at OSSREA hall. The main objectives of the team meeting were getting to know each other/introduction; create clear and common understanding about the 5-S project, identify areas of collaboration between different team members and/or avoid overlaps, and outline key project deliverables and timeline.

Professor Genet Tadele, country PI of the project commenced the meeting by welcoming all the participants. He then briefed about the objectives and importance of the meeting and gave some background information about the three previously held meetings conducted with some team members based in Addis Ababa. He advised the three PhD students to move to Addis Ababa for frequent interaction and engagement with the rest of the team.

Following Getnet's invitation, team members introduced themselves focusing on their academic background, previous work experiences and role in the 5-S project.

Subsequently, Getnet presented an overview of 5S project and other team members gave 20 - 30 minutes power point presentation about their project and planned activities. Right after each presentation, discussions followed and team members reflected on some methodological, theoretical, factual and other related issues

II. Presentations

The first presentation was made by Getnet. His presentation mainly focused on providing an overview of the 5-S foundation project and discussed the vision, aims, objectives, milestones and impacts of the project. He also presented methodological and theoretical issues such as the contribution of social sciences, the types of data needed and sources of data at different levels (macro, meso and miro) and the importance of capacity building and public engagement activities. In the last section of his presentation Getnet pointed out the ultimate purpose of all the efforts at macro, meso and micro level.



Picture 2: Getnet Tadele while giving his presentation

Kibur Engidawork (PhD), a post-doctoral research fellow gave the second presentation entitled '*Evaluation of a health intervention on the reduction of stigma towards patients of Podoconiosis in Ethiopia.*' Kibur presented about background information, aims of the evaluation research, theoretical framework of the study i.e. Context and Implementation of complex intervention (CICI) s) and study design. His presentation also included the major progress to date and the next steps.

Issues of Discussion: some of key issues raised during the discussion on Kibur's presentation were:

- The meeting highlighted that selection of study sites and intervention implementing organizations should be conducted with a careful consideration of intervention types and accessibility of areas. Kibur was asked if his free listing exercise of existing evaluations helped him choose a study area and he reported that a list of criteria would soon be set out to choose one intervention and its site for assessment.
- The meeting reminded that preparation for Ethics application need to be started early.



Picture3: Kibur Engidawork (PhD), a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow

The third presentation was on *'Understanding how precarity and marginalization affect refugees' vulnerability to, illness experiences of and responses to scabies in Ethiopia'* by **Addisu Tsegaye**, a PhD student. Addisu presented about background information related to his research topic. He also presented about the aims, rationale and objectives, methods of data collection, recruitment, analysis plan and ethics of his research proposal. Finally, Addisu discussed the theoretical framework he plans to apply and central issues from his literature review such as structural violence, precarity, NTD related stigma and Social Science.

Issues of Discussion: some of the reflections on Addisu's presentation were:

- How it is logical and sound to study stigma in closed communities like refugees because those people have the same status and isolated from the wider community. And who are the stigmatizers in such situations as there is no interaction between refugee and the wider public?
- The proposed study seems to be over ambitious and it may be difficult to achieve all proposed objectives within the time and resources available
- Addisu should consider using NVIVO software to analyse the qualitative data

- Because of contagious nature of the disease (scabies), what kind of participation is planned as part of ethnographic observation? The meeting emphasized on the importance of precautionary actions during fieldwork to protect researchers from exposure to scabies
- Order of presentation and time management and the importance rehearsing presentations in order to finish on slated time



Picture 4: Addisu Tsegaye, a PhD student

Following Addisu’s presentation, Dereje Wonde, a PhD student presented his proposed study entitled “*Everyday Life of People Affected by Scabies in Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia*”. Dereje presented about background of the study, statement of the problem, aims and objectives of the study, theories of social suffering and structural violence, research methods, data generation, analysis plan, research ethics and trust worthiness of his study.

Issues of Discussion: The meeting reflected on the following points:

- Contents and Power Point slides should be lively and attractive
- Why scabies and poverty are highly pervasive in the Amhara region? It important to question the conclusions of reports and articles in order to understand the root causes of social problems.
- Statement of the problem should focus on the current state of knowledge about the issue to be investigated; how it will address the knowledge gap and not on the consequences of scabies

- It is important to avoid quantitative terminologies (like socio-economic impacts) in the specific objectives as the research will only employ qualitative methods.
- It may be important to think to use NVIVO software to analyse the qualitative data



Picture 5: Dereje Wonde, a PhD student

The fifth presentation was made by **Tseganesh Mulugeta**, a PhD student at Addis Ababa University and member of public engagement team. Her presentation was entitled: *‘Communication Intervention for Behavior Change: Using Community Leaders in Community Conversations to Improve Well-Being and Reduce Stigma against Podoconiosis Patients in Amhara Region’*. Her presentation focused on statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, methodology and data analysis. She presented about purpose and means of developing health communication interventions, Cognitive and Social Ecological Models as framework for health communication intervention, and Community Conversations (CC) as Communication Intervention.

Issues of Discussion: some of key issues raised during the discussion on Tseganesh’s presentation were:

- Communication is not the only prerequisite to change human behaviour or a panacea for the problem of Podoconiosis. It is important to consider other factors that can influence behaviour.

- There is a discrepancy between theoretical frameworks (Social cognitive theory deals with individual behaviour & socio-ecological model deals with macro, Meso and micro level factors) and objectives of the proposal. As a result, the meeting advised Tseganesh to revise the proposal to address this and other limitations.
- Statement of the problem should mainly focus on the knowledge gap and how this study contributes to filling the lacuna in the field.



Picture 6: Tseganesh Mulugeta, a PhD student & Project's Public Engagement Officer

Finally, **Garedew Yilma**, coordinator of the 5S project presented about the project's Impact, Communications and Engagement (ICE) Strategy. His presentation mainly focused on communication strategy, key stakeholders at various levels, main channels and mechanisms to reach the stakeholders, major planned activities and roles and responsibilities of the team.



Picture 7: Garedew Yilma, Project Coordinator

Following the presentation, it was stressed that the implementation of ICE strategies will largely depend on the contacts PhDs and Post doctoral research fellow create at region and community level while carrying out the fieldwork. Those PhD students who did not participate in the development of ICE strategy were also asked to enlist stakeholders including their respective universities.

As closing remark, Getnet thanked all the participants for attending the team meeting and once again reminded the PhD students to relocate to Addis Ababa to have frequent engagements like this in the future. He also stressed the need to develop effective and attractive presentation skills within the time slatted and the need to be critical while reading and writing.