



MEETING ON IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASLES AND RUBELLA VACCINATION PROGRAM



Photo: Yowhans Mebrahtu

A workshop focusing on roll out of national measles and rubella vaccination program, which also includes the distribution of Vitamin A supplements, was conducted on 9 April in Asmara under the theme “Let’s Ensure Our Children’s Health with Integrated Effort”. The workshop was attended by heads of the Ministry of Health branches of all sub-zone and sub-zonal administrators.

Mr. Tedros Yihdego, head the national vaccination program, highlighted Eritrea’s commendable track record in executing vaccination programs. He pointed out the significant increase in vaccination coverage from 10% post-independence to a current rate of 97%, showcasing a remarkable public health achievement.

The upcoming vaccination

campaign is set to focus on children from 9 months to 5 years for the measles and rubella shots, and those from 6 months to 5 years will also be eligible for Vitamin A supplementation, further underscoring the initiative’s holistic approach to child health.

Col. Gebrehans Woldegergis, the Director General of Social Service in the region, emphasized the critical link between children’s health and the broader societal well-being. He called on the community at large, including administrators and community leaders, to play an active role in ensuring the smooth execution of this health drive.

The workshop facilitated thorough discussions on various facets of the program and wrapped up with a unified pledge from the attendees to dedicate themselves to

the successful implementation of the vaccination campaign.

The measles and rubella vaccination drive, accompanied by the distribution of Vitamin A, is scheduled to take place from April 24 to 28, marking a significant step towards bolstering public health in the region.

HALHALE AGRO-INDUSTRY PROJECT ADVANCES KNOWLEDGE SHARING

The Halhale agro-industry project, under the auspices of the Livestock and Crops Corporation, is making significant contributions to the exchange of knowledge and experience with newly assigned college graduates.

Maj. Kibreab Abraham, General Manager of the Corporation, reported that over three thousand college graduates, including more than two thousand two hundred, are actively engaged in the project. He noted that their involvement through on-the-job theoretical and practical training is significantly contributing to the project’s development.

Maj. Kibreab further stated that the graduates are involved in various activities such as dairy farming, preparation of vegetable and fruit seeds, and farming of vegetables and animal fodder. They also participate in the installation of water pipelines, playing a vital role in the project’s expansion and improvement.

The college graduates themselves reported gaining valuable experience by actively participating in the agro-industry activities. They expressed a strong commitment to further enhance their participation in the development of the project.



EID AL-FITR AL-MUBAREK CELEBRATED NATIONWIDE

Eid Al-Fitr Al-Mubarek was celebrated with enthusiasm nationwide on 10 April. The celebration at Bahti Meskerem Square was graced by the presence of senior Government and PFDJ officials, religious leaders, members of the diplomatic community as well as a number of the faithful.

Salat led by Sheik Salem

Ibrahim Al Muktar, General Secretary of the Central Office of Eritrean Eftae and Islamic Affairs, was conducted.

Speaking at the event, Sheik Ibrahim gave briefing on the meaning of the Ramadan fasting and Eid Al-Fetir and congratulated the Eritrean people in general and the followers of

the Islamic faith in particular and the Eritrean Defense Forces.

The celebratory event was broadcast live by Eritrean Television and the National Radio (Dimtsi Hafash).

According to reports, Eid Al-Fetir Al-Mubarek was colorfully celebrated across the country.

SRS: INTENSIFIED EFFORTS TO BOOST SAFE BLOOD SUPPLY

The National Voluntary Blood Donors Association in the Southern Red Sea region held an awareness-raising seminar in Assab city to increase the supply of safe blood.

At the seminar, health professionals stressed the importance of voluntary blood donation, underscoring its life-saving effects and the health benefits it provides donors.

Mr. Osman Abdulkadir, head of the branch association, acknowledged the efforts made by the branch and announced plans to organize similar seminars in other subzones. He urged all stakeholders to actively contribute to the success of these initiatives.

The participants expressed readiness to boost voluntary blood donation with a view to save lives with their renewable blood and urged for the sustainability of the seminar aimed at developing the understanding of the public.



Photos: kbrom Tihayay

Development

Overview of Shieb Subzone

Mussie Efriem

Located 85 kilometers west of Massawa, Shieb subzone boasts a unique combination of topography and climate. The subzone's elevation ranges from sea level near the coast to 1,800 meters in the Geleb mountains. This variation creates a spectrum of climatic conditions ideal for agriculture, making the subzone the most fertile area in the Northern Red Sea region. Shieb town, the capital of the subzone, is an intersection of the eastern lowlands and highlands and is located at the center of the subzone and.

There are large streams that cross the subzone, including the Rivel Laba, Grigir, Kintsale, Tiluk, Garsile, and several smaller streams, which water the over 8,000 hectares of farmland. Although the rivers that pour into the area supply plentiful fertile soil, floods can also inflict damage to farms. To combat flooding and increase productivity, agricultural research institutes, sub-zonal administration offices, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), and local farmers work collaboratively on soil and water conservation programs.

The subzone is known for its



watermelon, which are sold at markets in Asmara, Massawa, and Ghindae. Agronomists say Shieb subzone is ideal for growing sorghum, which is popular throughout the country. The subzone is a significant contributor to Eritrea's sorghum production.

The MoA's branch in Shieb offers extension services to farmers, including training on

farms.

Although Shieb subzone has abundant fertile land and water resources, its potential for the expansion of irrigated farms hasn't yet been very well exploited. Mr. Abubeker Ibrahim Abdela, administrator of Shieb subzone, said they have plans to implement initiatives to encourage and expand irrigated farms. There is a plan to build a dam soon to better utilize water for irrigated farms. Mr. Abubeker added that their work-for-food program brought about excellent results last year in controlling the flow of water towards the farmland.

To make education accessible, schools are made available in all except two administrative areas-- Kilo and Shelshal, whose communities are nomads.



hard-to-reach areas, outreach programs are made available.

There are around 30 schools, from pre-school to high school, spread across Shieb subzone, serving over 5,400 students. Mussa Adem Jaber, head of Education in the subzone, said they are committed to expanding access to schools in their subzone. As part of the adult education

of a secondary school in their subzone has allowed them to attend school closer to home. Mr. Mussa said most of the schools in the subzone are very well-equipped with teaching materials and infrastructure although there are some schools that need renovation.

In terms of healthcare, Shieb subzone is doing quite well. There have been three healthcare facilities in the subzone: a health center in Shieb town and health stations in Weqiro and Gidgid. And last year a new one was opened in Wegrietat, bringing the total number of healthcare facilities to four. The facilities give primary healthcare services, including outpatient services, vaccinations, pre- and post-natal care, and child care.

During the winter season, the number of people who seek medical services in the subzone increases significantly because many that had been away due to the weather come back home. The summer months also see a significant influx of people from the neighboring Geleb subzone. Many residents of Geleb own farmlands in Shieb subzone and often stay there to farm. The temporary rise in population does put an extra strain on the subzone's healthcare facilities, but the authorities do their best to ensure that all are served well.



soil and water conservation methods. This year, citizens of the subzone undertook numerous successful water and soil conservation campaigns. Through their concerted efforts local communities in the subzone have revitalized previously unproductive areas. As a result, certain areas that had been rendered unproductive for over four years due to severe flooding are now turned into suitable

Initiatives have been taken to resettle scattered communities along main roads with a view to making social services such as education and health care accessible for all. By raising the communities' awareness about the benefits of the initiatives, the subzone hopes to have a more unified and well-served population. And to provide social services to nomadic communities and communities that live in

program, schools offer extension classes to adults who have missed out on the opportunity to go to school earlier in life. This has led to a rise in student enrollment.

Prior to the opening of the secondary school in Shieb, students had to travel to boarding schools in nearby subzones after completing their junior secondary school education in their subzone. The opening

Shieb subzone is making progress in infrastructure and transport services. The asphalt road that connects Gahteley to Afabet goes through the subzone. The majority of settlements have access to clean, potable tap water, while the remainder get their water from wells created specifically for that purpose.

Shieb subzone borders the Red Sea and Massawa subzones to the east, Gindae subzone to the south, Geleb subzone to the west, and Afabet subzone to the north. The subzone has around 45,000 inhabitants who live in eight administrative areas. The majority of the inhabitants of Shieb subzone are Tigre and Rashaida, and most people live on agriculture and raising animals while few engage in trade. The subzone is distinguished by hot and sometimes mild temperatures and two rainy seasons, making it ideal for agriculture.



photo: Abiel Bereket

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SpotLight

My Health, My Right: Shining the Light on Progress within Health and Well-Being

Dr. Fikrejesus Amahazion

Earlier this week, the world commemorated World Health Day (WHD) under the theme, “My Health, My Right.” Celebrated annually, WHD is a great day to reflect on global progress and identify areas for improvement. In Eritrea, WHD was observed at national level in Asmara, with a large gathering involving detailed presentations and valuable contributions from an array of local authorities and government officials, health experts and professionals, and international development partners. In light of WHD, the following article highlights health policies and progress in Eritrea.

Policy and progress

The health and well-being of its people is among Eritrea’s leading and most significant priorities. This is reflected within the National Charter, which was adopted in Nakfa in 1994 and lays out the guiding vision and aspirations for the nation. After declaring that “Our greatest asset is our human resource,” it states that:

“Health service [with education] is the other fundamental right. All Eritreans, whether residents of rural or urban areas, are entitled to basic health services. We must fairly distribute health services throughout the country. To spread health education and

to give priority to prevention are important aspects of the service.”

Eritrea’s national policy aims to maximize the health and well-being of all citizens at all ages and seeks to ensure equity and access to essential health services, utilizing primary health care as a key strategy and consistent with universal health coverage (UHC) principles. Over the years, a plethora of interventions have been implemented to expand access and improve care for all, and progress is being registered towards achievement of UHC. Today, health services are heavily subsidized, with patients required to make only nominal payments – which are wholly waived in cases of financial need. Many essential health services are provided completely free of charge, while all patients with certain chronic diseases and other disorders are provided with free care and prescribed medications.

Accessibility, the expansion of health infrastructure, and human resource development have all been areas of major focus, with the country constructing and renovating many health facilities, as well as considerably increasing the number of doctors and health professionals. There are now 335 health facilities distributed across the country (comprising hospitals, health centres, health stations, and clinics) – a nearly fourfold increase from 1991, while the number of doctors has

been increased from 100 in 1997 to 291 by 2021. Across the same period, the number of dentists rose from 6 to 59, nurses from 625 to 1,474, assistant nurses from 1,220 to 2,918, dental therapists from 11 to 165, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians from 97 to 486, laboratory technicians from 99 to 517, radiologists from 28 to 132, physiotherapy technicians from 6 to 140, and specialized doctors from 5 to 74. Notably, the government covers the full costs

percent of the population now lives within a 10 km radius of a health facility and 70 percent within a 5 km radius – figures which represent major improvements from just a few decades ago.

Considerable national progress has additionally been made in improving reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health. The maternal mortality ratio dropped from 998 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 228

management of neonatal and childhood illnesses in communities and facilities around the country, as well as improving the quality of care in the peripartum period by strengthening health worker skills in early essential newborn care and scaling up access to neonatal intensive care.

Through sustained implementation of high-impact interventions and a well-coordinated multi-sectoral approach, notable success has been achieved in halting the spread of HIV and sustaining a decline in prevalence and incidence. Based on recent estimates from UNAIDS, HIV prevalence among adults (aged 15-49 years) in Eritrea was approximately 0.4 percent in 2022, down from 1.1 percent at independence in 1991. Additionally, in terms of incidence, it has declined from about 1.37 per 1,000 uninfected population (across all ages) in 1991 to 0.06 in 2022, while the total annual number of AIDS-related deaths across all age groups in the country is estimated to be a few hundred – and continuing to decline annually. Again, these improvements have seen Eritrea climb precipitously from having some of the worst figures on the planet to now being categorized as among the best in Africa and the wider developing world.

An especially noteworthy development is how the HIV positivity rate among pregnant women in testing has been significantly reduced in recent years. Specifically, it has fallen from about 0.18 percent in 2017 to around 0.05 percent in 2021. Likewise, the mother-to-child transmission rate has maintained steady decline, and it is estimated to be less than 1.8 percent. All of this translates to fewer and fewer children in the country – at present only a small handful – being born with HIV. Comparatively, worldwide it is estimated that in the absence of interventions, the rate of transmission of HIV from a mother living with HIV to her child during pregnancy, labor, delivery or breastfeeding ranges from 15 to 45 percent. As a result of these improvements, Eritrea has begun working with international organizations to



of education, training, and salaries for all health workers, and there are no recruitment ceilings or constraints.

Distribution is also being improved, with more health workers now serving in rural and hard-to-reach areas. As was highlighted by Dr. Andebrhan Tesfatsion, acting director of public health at Eritrea’s Ministry of Health, approximately 80

in 2015, and 184 in 2019 – an overall reduction of 82 percent. The proportion of deliveries by skilled health workers has risen to 71 percent, the percentage of pregnant women attending at least one antenatal care visit has increased to 98 percent, and more mothers and newborns are now receiving postnatal care within two days of childbirth.

Meanwhile, in terms of the child mortality rate, regarded by health experts worldwide as an effective proxy indicator for overall child health and well-being, Eritrea has dramatically improved from 146 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1991 to 38 in 2021. Placing that into better context, it has moved from having one of the worst under-five mortality rates anywhere on the planet, to now being among the leaders on the continent and within the broader developing world. Notably, Eritrea’s average annual rate of reduction across the period is around 4.5 percent – one of the fastest in the world. Similarly, the neonatal mortality rate has been reduced by about 50 percent.

Importantly, plans are in place to begin providing more holistic and comprehensive health care for children based on integrated



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Mummified Baboon from Ancient Egyptian Thebes

The Hamadryas Baboon (*Papio hamadryas*) is the largest species of monkey found in Eritrea. An adult male can weigh up to 17

pounds, animal skins, and live baboons brought to the ancient Egyptian capital, Thebes, now the modern city of Luxor. The origin



kilograms. Baboons are common in many parts of Eritrea. Travelers between Asmara and Massawa often see groups of 50 or more on each side of the highway and even in the middle. This biodiversity article discusses the possible ancient use of Eritrean baboons as mummies in Egyptian tombs more than 3000 years ago. The next issue on biodiversity will discuss the ecology of living baboons in Eritrea.

Hamadryas Baboon, also called the Sacred Baboon, was revered by ancient Egyptians as a representative of the god of the moon and wisdom and as an advisor to the sun god Ra. There were no native baboons in Egypt, so the Egyptians had to import them from parts of Africa south of Egypt. There are ancient reports from Egypt as far back as the 18th Dynasty, over 3000 years ago, about exotic products like gold,

of the imported products, including Sacred Baboons, was called Punt. Hieroglyphic texts describe boat trips and the products, but these texts do not tell the location of Punt.

KING TUT'S BURIAL CHAMBER WITH IMAGE ON WALL OF 12 SACRED BABOONS

The 18th Dynasty mortuary of Queen Hatshepsut has images of two baboons on a wall in the temple. On another wall are pictures of baboons on the sail of an Egyptian boat returning from Punt. Tourists can see the mortuary and the photos in ancient Thebes.

Commerce between Egypt and Punt gradually declined after Ramesses III's reign (1164-1196 BC). Memories of Punt slowly faded until the city transformed into legend and folklore. In the First Century BC, Egypt became a

Are Mummies in Ancient Egyptian Tombs Originally from Adulis?

province of Rome. The trade center Adulis, located around the gulf of Zula of Eritrea, was the main port of commerce between Egypt and the Mediterranean regions and the Horn of Africa. Adulis remained a trade center until it was abandoned around the 9th Century AD.

Some historians have suggested that Adulis and Punt may have been the same trading center between the coast of Eritrea south of Massawa and Egypt but separated by a thousand years of history. Archeologists found two fragments of glass vessels in the lowest layers at Adulis, similar to glass samples from the 18th Dynasty of Egypt. Since no ancient Egyptian accounts of Punt's location exist, even with many accounts and images of trade items available, discussions for or against Adulis and Punt being in the exact location are not resolved.

Recently, two scientific articles reported the results of studies of Sacred Baboon mummies from ancient Egyptian tombs. In 2020, a research study was published that used isotopic analysis of oxygen and strontium ratios of 155 baboons from 77 locations across various African regions. There is geographic variation in the oxygen-to-strontium ratio stored in tooth enamel. These results can be plotted on maps as geographic



Baboon Image on Sail of Boat Returning from Punt

fingerprints of African locations. The mummy used in the study was bought in Egypt and given to the British Museum in 1837. It was found in the Temple of Khonsu in Thebes. The temple was built over three thousand years ago during the Twentieth Dynasty between 1186 and 1155 BC.

When the oxygen to strontium ratio from the mummy was compared to the strontium ratios of modern baboons from 77 locations in Africa, the baboon brought from Punt to Thebes over three thousand years ago matched the strontium ratios of modern baboons from the Horn of Africa, including Eritrea. This finding does not confirm Adulis as the source of the baboon mummy, but it shows that Punt was

within a limited geographic region that includes Adulis.

In 2023, a study reported a DNA study. One baboon mummy from an Egyptian tomb was compared to 14 museum specimens from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Sudan. The results place the DNA of the mummy with the DNA of baboons that live in eastern Sudan and Eritrea. This is additional evidence that Punt and Adulis may be geographically the same. We hope that more research using advanced DNA technology will finally solve the ancient Land of Punt mystery.

National Public Diplomacy Group's Quarterly Online Magazine, March Publication



Mortuary of Queen Hatshepsut with image of two Baboons

OPINION

Bisha Hybrid Library

One School's Experience in Bridging the Digital Divide

By Delina Yemane Dawit

A wise man named Harold Howe once said, "What a school thinks about its library is a measure of what it feels about education". In fact, almost every wise person in history, at one point or another in their lives, has spoken very fondly about libraries and the underrated power they hold. Or so I believe.

We often associate the word "Education" with brightly coloured classrooms, where students sit in rows facing teachers writing on blackboards, a stack of textbooks and notes waiting to be studied in order to pass exams. Students develop a familiar rhythm: go to school, take notes, study textbooks, sit exams, get good (or at least passing) grades, and repeat.

This way, it's easy to overlook the old faithful libraries. Yes, those quasi-empty rooms whose books patiently wait to be explored by only a handful of students a year. Rooms filled to the brim with old and new wisdom, ancient and other-worldly adventures, potential friends and mentors, all waiting for someone, anyone, to open up their pages and discover some of the finest ideas thought up by some of the finest minds humanity has to offer: the actual, long-lasting, most sustainable form of education.

As such, it's always a pleasure to see a school and its young students actually use- and speak fondly- of libraries.

Several months ago, I had the privilege to visit *Bisha Junior and Secondary School* in Barentu, the capital city of Gash Barka region in Eritrea.

Bisha is like any other Eritrean school, with extensive school grounds made up of rows of one-story concrete buildings, each housing several classrooms. As we entered the premises, the classrooms buzzed with the students' lively energy, a short intermission between the second and third periods.

The principal, Mr Kahsu Fikre Araya, and the school administrator, Mr Efreem Tesfatsion Kiflemichael, welcomed us in and led us



to one of the classrooms: an audiovisual room complete with a large LCD Smart TV and about a dozen computers. The tenth graders were all in their seats, the teacher also sitting near them. In the middle of the class, a young girl, about 15 years old, stood with a remote control in hand, and a PowerPoint presentation on the screen, explaining (coincidentally) the impact of technology on education. And with an impressive command of the English language at that.

Following the lecture, we proceeded to the students' favourite place on campus: the school library. The room was identical to the other classrooms, save for the shelves filled with an assortment of old and new books, reference texts and a series of fictions of variable genres. But the library wasn't popular for its set of physical books: the digital component was the main attraction. The school officially named its library "*Bisha Hybrid Library Service*", complete with a logo.

First introduced around the end of 2018, the hybrid library service was installed with the help of Rora Digital Library, a virtual library service in Eritrea that works to provide relevant supplementary educational resources to schools and colleges across the country. Since its establishment, the school has set up three solar-powered audiovisual rooms, so students can learn interactively to better navigate using computers and tools like PowerPoint.

The digital library contains resources such as video lectures from schools in the US, UK, Canada, and others, all categorized by subject, grade

and topic; an offline version of Wikipedia with about 90GB worth of data; textbooks for reference used by schools in those English speaking countries, mock-exam papers, worksheets, national books in softcopy form for easier access, practical demonstration videos for science experiments, English language videos for every level and every grade and hundreds of fiction and non-fiction books in English, Tigrinya, Tigre, Arabic and other national languages. Everything can be accessed via the students' mobile phones and tablets.

As pleased as I was learning about the contents, I wanted to know just how much the students used these resources – and I wanted to hear it directly from them. So I spoke to a dozen students, all eager to talk about the effects of their school's hybrid library on their lives. Each student told me how they felt its impact: the first was Rahel Habteab Tekle, the tenth grader I had seen give a lecture in the AV room.

"My father lives abroad, and my mother didn't go to school, so she can't help me with my schoolwork. Before the digital library was set up, I could only rely on my textbooks, my teachers and the occasional book for information, but now I can find the answers to whatever questions I have in the library all on my own."

This momentarily struck me. It's easy to forget that every child comes from a different background and that school, like life, is not a level playing field. If left unaddressed, students' socioeconomic backgrounds significantly affect their academic

outcomes. But thankfully, equal access to libraries can help even out the scoreboard, provided, of course, that the students are taught to use them properly. And, if the students are as dedicated as Rahel, they may even shoot to the top of the class. This reminded me of something Andrew Carnegie once said: "There is not such a cradle of democracy upon the Earth as the free public library, this republic of letters, where neither rank, office, nor wealth receives the slightest consideration".

Libraries, digital and hybrid in particular, help bridge the digital divide, not just among students in a community, but between developed and developing countries as well. Let's face it: developing countries like Eritrea don't have the same resources as affluent countries like the US or Japan, translating into a significant gap in the resources available to students and, unless we bridge the divide, it can ultimately translate into a huge gap in student outcomes. With these digital libraries, schools in developing countries can leverage the resources available only in those developed nations.

In the words of Yoel Kibrom Tesfai, an eleventh-grader, "The library has so many videos on practical lessons, so when I want to better understand how an electromagnetic field works, for example, I can just watch one of those practical lessons done in foreign schools. And the fact that I actually see the visuals with my own eyes means I won't forget it so easily."

Metkel Beyene Habte, a tenth grader, remembered all too well how inconvenient her

assignments had been a few years back: "Whenever the teachers gave us a research assignment, I encountered a lot of difficulties in doing them because the internet was too slow and I couldn't track down the books I needed. My family couldn't help me either because my mother didn't finish school. But now, I can find the resources to do an assignment within a few minutes."

One of the best and most crucial things about a library is its independence. You won't have teachers hovering over you, telling you to read this book, not that; watch this lecture over another. Students must learn to navigate and comb through the books and information independently. Though probably challenging at first, it will ultimately teach them to be independent learners– they will learn to ask questions and find answers on their own. With time, they will come to understand that knowledge is not confined to schools. And as they say, once a child learns to use the library, the doors to learning are always open. It's what Abdelmenan Hassen and Rim Kibreab told me: "At this point, going to the library has become a daily habit. When we finish school, my friends and I stop by to download at least one book or one lesson on our phones, even when there is no assignment. It's become an instinct."

For tenth grade student Andreas Jacob Adu, the best part of the digital library was the collection of English learning videos that helped with his listening and speaking skills: "I often watch

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Vacancy Announcement No.:

Issued on:
Deadline For Application: 17 April, 2024

Position Title:	Administrative Assistant	Grade Level:	G-4
Organizational Unit:	FAO Representation in Eritrea, FRERI	Duty Station:	Asmara, Eritrea
		Duration *:	Fixed-term: two years with possibility of extension
		Post Number:	0807702
		CCOG Code:	2102

*The length of appointment for internal FAO candidates will be established in accordance with applicable policies pertaining to the extension of appointments

Organizational Setting

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda through the FAO Strategic Framework by supporting the transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life*, leaving no one behind.

The main objective in the FAO country offices, which are headed by an FAO Representative, is to assist Governments to develop policies, programmes and projects to achieve food security and to reduce hunger and malnutrition, to help develop the agricultural, fisheries and forestry sectors, and to use their environmental and natural resources in a sustainable manner.

The post is located in the FAO Representation in Asmara, Eritrea.

Main Purpose

The Administrative Assistant performs a large variety of routine administrative transactions and office support functions contributing to the smooth and efficient running of the work unit.

Supervision Received/Exercised

The Administrative Assistant reports to the Assistant FAO Representative (Administration).

He/she acts independently in routine matters. Supervision received is focused on the quality of the work performed and provides for on-the-job learning.

Working Relationships

The Administrative Assistant usually interacts with a wide variety of colleagues within the work unit and with immediate clients within the Organization, providing routine administrative and office support services.

Key Functions/Results

- Retrieve, enter, select and analyse data from a wide variety of sources, including FAO's corporate system and data bases; verify accuracy of data documents; make necessary calculations.
- Assemble and review supporting documentation for processing affiliate workforce, travel or financial actions in FAO's corporate systems, while ensuring compliance with FAO's rules and regulations.
- Maintain imprest accounts; reconcile expenditures, balances, payments, statements and other data; assist in the preparation of recurring and special reports by preparing and editing data in appropriate format as requested; monitor project, programme and general office accounts.
- Maintain detailed records of budget estimates, obligations and available balances; record receipts and disbursements (ledgers, cash books, vouchers, etc.); make disbursements from petty cash fund and balance accounts.
- Prepare routine correspondence of an administrative nature; draft correspondence to verify data, answer queries, and obtain additional information on transactions and financial matters, as required.
- Maintain local inventory records with responsibility for proper recording of assets, their maintenance and safeguard.
- Maintain a filing system of administrative and financial documents.
- Maintain liaison with local banks and financial institutions to keep up-to-date with financial and regulatory information (exchange and interest rates, procedures and rules, maintenance of bank accounts, etc.).
- Support the administration of personnel and equipment as well as protocol-related issues.
- Assist in duties related to recruitment, payroll, staff development, and other HR administrative duties.
- Perform other related duties as required.

Impact Of Work

The incumbent's work impacts on the timely and efficient delivery of office support services and on the overall output of the work unit.

CANDIDATES WILL BE ASSESSED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING

Minimum Requirements

Education: Secondary school education.

Experience: Three years of experience in administrative and office support work.

Languages: Working knowledge (proficient - level C) of English.

IT Skills: Good knowledge of the MS Office applications, Internet and office technology equipment.

Ability to use accounting software and other information systems and databases to insert data, make enquiries, retrieve/define ad hoc reports and analyses and edit results in appropriate format.

Residency: General Service Staff are recruited locally. To be eligible for this position, candidates must be nationals of the country of the duty station or possess an existing visa/work permit and reside within commuting distance of the duty station at the time of the application. "Commuting distance" means the distance within which staff members can travel daily between their place of work and their residence.

Competencies

- Results Focus
- Team Work
- Communication
- Building effective relationships
- Knowledge Sharing and Continuous Improvement

Technical Skills

- Good knowledge of the communication and documentation standards.
- Good knowledge of corporate computerized financial/travel/human resources systems and administrative procedures and policies.
- Good knowledge of the organizational structure.
- Candidate should provide evidence of completion/exemption from the National Service.

Desirable Qualifications And Skills

- Limited knowledge (intermediate - level B) of one of the other working languages of the Organization (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish).

Application should be submitted in the below link:

https://jobs.fao.org/careersection/fao_external/jobdetail.ftl?job=2401113&tz=GMT%2B02%3A00&tzname=Europe%2FBerlin

Please note that all candidates should adhere to *FAO Values of Commitment to FAO, Respect for All and Integrity and Transparency*.



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		CCOG Code:	2101

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Organizational Setting

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda through the FAO Strategic Framework by supporting the transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life*, leaving no one behind.

The main objective in the FAO country offices, which are headed by an FAO Representative, is to assist Governments to develop policies, programmes and projects to achieve food security and to reduce hunger and malnutrition, to help develop the agricultural, fisheries and forestry sectors, and to use their environmental and natural resources in a sustainable manner.

The post is located in the FAO Representation in Asmara, Eritrea.

Main Purpose

The Office Assistant coordinates and performs the full range of office support, management support and administrative tasks, providing for the smooth and efficient running of the Office. He/she ensures quality and consistency of the flow of office work and information in the work unit.

Supervision Received/Exercised

The Office Assistant reports to the FAO Representative (FAOR) and to the Assistant FAORs. The incumbent operates independently, takes decisions on work priorities and exercises initiative for dealing with cases without precedents. Supervision received is focused on the quality of work outputs. He/she provides guidance and advice to other office support staff.

Working Relationships

The Office Assistant works closely with a wide range of colleagues in the division/region, with central units and external clients, performing and coordinating office and management support services and providing procedural guidance and information.

Key Functions/Results

- Screen requests for appointments with supervisor; maintain supervisor's calendar; confirm mutually convenient schedules and arrange appointments; receive visitors; place and screen telephone calls; respond to queries and correspondence, often of a sensitive, confidential or technical nature.
- Coordinate office support services for meetings, trainings, seminars, committees and special projects and events; attend meetings, prepare minutes, monitor follow-up activities; make arrangements for formal editing, translation, etc., of documents and publications.
- Review, record, distribute and process incoming mail and correspondence; follow-up on pending actions; prepare draft responses to a wide range of correspondence and other communications, often requiring knowledge of technical terminologies and/or detailed office procedures; carry out quality control functions for outgoing documents; proofread texts for adherence to format, grammar, punctuation and style.
- Perform a variety of administrative duties, e.g. contract extensions and requests for temporary staff, leave and attendance recording, budget preparation and follow-up; coordinate with other units to ensure smooth running and expedition of work within the unit.
- Research, compile and organize background information and reference materials from various sources for reports, briefs and speeches; generate a variety of statistical and other reports from various databases.
- Coordinate the work of other office support staff, establish priorities and ensure equitable distribution of work; train new staff to relevant administrative procedures and practices and provide general assistance as required.
- Create and maintain the work unit's filing and reference systems; review the efficiency of office procedures and make recommendations for improvements; update office websites.
- Perform other duties as required.

Impact of Work

The incumbent's work impacts directly on the smooth and efficient running of the Office. He/she plays a lead role in the provision of office support services for successful achievement of the organizational unit's mandate.

CANDIDATES WILL BE ASSESSED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING

Minimum Requirements

Education: Secondary School Education.

Experience: Four years of relevant experience in office/management support work.

Languages: Working knowledge (proficient - level C) of English.

IT Skills: Very good knowledge of the MS Office applications, Internet and office technology equipment.

Residency: General Service Staff are recruited locally. To be eligible for this position, candidates must be nationals of the country of the duty station or possess an existing visa/work permit and reside within commuting distance of the duty station at the time of the application. "Commuting distance" means the distance within which staff members can travel daily between their place of work and their residence.

Competencies

- Results Focus
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Building Effective Relationships
- Knowledge Sharing and Continuous Improvement

Technical Skills

- Very good knowledge of communication and documentation standards.
- Very good knowledge of corporate computerized financial/travel/human resources systems and administrative procedures and policies.
- Very good knowledge of the organizational structure.
- Candidates should provide evidence of completion/exemption from the National Service.

Desirable Qualifications and Skills

Limited knowledge (intermediate - level B) of one of the other working languages of the Organization (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish).

Application should be submitted in the below link:

https://jobs.fao.org/careersection/fao_external/jobdetail.ftl?job=2401115&tz=GMT%2B02%3A00&tzname=Europe%2FBerlin

Please note that all candidates should adhere to *FAO Values of Commitment to FAO, Respect for All and Integrity and Transparency*.

LOCAL NEWS

EXTENSIVE DEVELOPMENTAL POPULAR CAMPAIGNS

Extensive developmental popular campaigns are currently underway in the sub-zones of Aditekelezan and Elaberet, with robust participation from the residents.

Mr. Tesfaldet Gebrebrhan, the head of the agriculture office in Aditekelezaan sub-zone, reported that the popular campaign, which commenced in January, encompasses the construction of terraces, water diversion schemes, and land preparation for cultivation.

Similar popular campaigns are also taking place in the administrative areas of Sheib-

seleba and Debre Sina, Elaberet sub-zone.

According to reports, in Debre Sina administrative area, 7 km of dirt road has been renovated, and over 1,100 meters of water diversion scheme have been constructed. In Sheib-Selaba administrative area, approximately 20,000 meters of terraces and over 10,000 cubic meters of water diversion schemes have been built.

The administrators of these administrative areas, applauding the residents' active participation in the popular campaign, have called for enhanced involvement in future campaigns.

TRAINING ON DOCUMENTATION AND ARCHIVE MANAGEMENT

The administration of the Central Region, in cooperation with the Research and Documentation Center, provided training on documentation and archive management to 180 employees.

Mr. Bereket Taddese, the head of human resources in the Central Region, stated that the training aimed to enhance the employees' capacity to ensure proper documentation and management of documents, and to deliver timely and efficient service to clients.

Mr. Tekie Keleta, the head of administration and finance in the region, highlighted the importance of the training in facilitating the daily operations of administrations at all levels and called for the program's sustainability.

Ms. Azieb Tewolde, the Director-General of the Research and Documentation Center, expressed the center's readiness to contribute to the effort to develop the employees' capacities in this area.

The trainees expressed their determination to apply the

knowledge gained from the training in their work and to provide timely and efficient service to clients.

Mr. Fesehaye Haile, the Governor of the Central Region, encouraged the trainees to bring about fundamental changes in the documentation and archive management system.



Bisha Hybrid Library . . .

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English language lessons taught by native speakers, which also teaches me proper pronunciation, and when I find words I don't know, I refer to the digital dictionary. The library has really improved my English"

As a bibliophile, I wondered whether the students also used the libraries to read for pleasure, so I asked three ninth graders about their reading habits outside academic requirements. Two of them, Nobel Measho Yared and Edom Fissaha Kiflu told me how access to short novels, particularly detective stories, in the hybrid library has not only kept them entertained but also helped them improve their English vocabulary and the videos they watch in the AV rooms during English class taught them how to pronounce the words correctly. The third, Issayas Mehari Weldai, expressed, "My friends and I all

download different books, and after we finish reading them, we tell each other about what we read."

Ninth graders Waha Yacob Hassen and Kedija Ibrahim expressed how the digital library had helped them improve their grades in school. "My average used to be around 70% back when I was in the 7th grade, when the digital library was first being set up. Now, it's around 90%, and the library is one of the main reasons" said Waha.

Yosan Weldekidan Haile (a tenth grader) summarized her experience in one succinct sentence: "The library is a school all on its own."

Every single one of the students expressed their appreciation not just for the library but for the teachers who encouraged them to use it. Practically all eight students expressed their gratitude and admiration for four teachers in particular: Physics teacher Mr

Tesfahiwet Kahsay Gebremariam, Geography teacher Mr Ghirmay Kalala Kullu and IT teachers Mr Nahom Berhane Gebremariam and Mr. Filmon Mulue Tsegay, all of whom helped empower the students to seek knowledge beyond the limits of classrooms and beyond their usual textbooks.

Hearing those kids talk about a library with such open excitement was beyond what I had expected when I first arrived.

Bisha Secondary School is a testament to the progress that can be made when we learn to bridge the gap in the world's educational resources. While digital libraries have been incorporated into several schools across the country, Bisha in particular seized the opportunity to complement the students' lessons with the library's material; and, in the process, managed to equip its students with the most essential tools: curiosity, educational self-reliance, and a genuine appreciation for learning, for books and, yes, for libraries.

My Health, my Right . . .

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complete the process of validation and certification of elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Alongside the above, the country is transitioning from pre-elimination towards elimination of malaria, and there have been major inroads against tuberculosis, hepatitis B, and neglected tropical diseases. Additionally, tremendous strides have been made with regard to national vaccination. The proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in the National Immunization Programme is nearly universal, with more than 95 percent of children fully immunized for their age. Worth noting, too, is that while at independence there were only six vaccines available for children, the routine vaccination program has steadily grown so that today Eritrea administers 14 vaccines.

Eritrea's progress in health can be roughly captured by the country's improvements in terms of life expectancy. According to the United Nations Statistics Division, life expectancy at birth has soared from less than 50 at independence to above 67 last year – a steep upward trajectory positively distinguished from many others on the continent.

Looking ahead for further improvement and progress

Despite the considerable progress made over the years, there remain many areas for improvement. The following are just a few. For one, although child and maternal mortality have been drastically reduced, with Eritrea encouragingly remaining on track to achieve the associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets, overall levels of child and maternal mortality are still unacceptably high. Locally, the death of even one child or mother is regarded as too many and considerable efforts are being made to ensure further reductions in morbidity and mortality.

As well, there must be continuous focus on communicable diseases and reproductive, maternal, and child health issues, including nutritional deficiencies, diarrheal diseases, and acute respiratory infections. Additionally, the recent shift in the national disease burden from communicable diseases to non-communicable diseases, which is closely associated with a variety of different factors, such as urbanization and changing diets, lifestyles, and behaviors, calls for renewed efforts and further work to reduce major modifiable risk factors, develop and implement effective legal frameworks, and orient the health system through people-centered health care.

