

## Finding and treating people with TB in

# Ethiopia

- Coordinated sputum collection centers in isolated areas provide access to services where they did not previously exist
- Nearly double the number of TB cases detected in first eight months of the project
- Combating stigma and education campaigns



**Dawro Zone** - The Dawro Zone of Southern Ethiopia is an extremely isolated area. Both landlocked and mountainous, the area is poorly accessible at best and the people of Dawro have only limited contact with health services. Given the challenges it was not surprising that Dawro's health services detected less than 20% of the estimated tuberculosis (TB) cases in 2009. Contributing factors included the lack of health facilities; the generally poor performance of those that did exist; a lack of communication and a correspondingly low level of counseling between local populations and health institutions; and a loss of focus on TB within the health system nationally. Inter Aide Ethiopia started work to remedy this situation in September 2010. Community volunteers and health workers have set up on-site sputum collection centers and referral systems with

community mediators in isolated areas. The volunteers and health workers are also trained to conduct informational campaigns aimed at reducing stigma and improving understanding of TB. Diagnostic facilities were decentralized into hot spot areas in order to improve the quality of service provided to care seekers. The project also began an advocacy programme designed to reinstate TB as a major focus within the existing health care system. This integrated approach, as opposed to purely medical interventions, has produced some amazing successes.

So far there has been a 99% increase in new smear positive case detection in the first eight months of the project. These greatly improved numbers have helped to change the perception of the importance of TB control among health care providers and have strengthened their support for these new initiatives.

