

SCOPE SUCCESS STORY

HAITI



Louis is a mother of four who became a community health worker to help women in her community.

USAID/World Relief: Photo by Louis Dieuquifait
World Relief Field Officer

NAME AND ROLE

Louis Suzette, Community Health Worker

LOCATION

Pichon/Belle Anse/Sud Est, Haiti

SUMMARY

Louis shares her experience as a community health worker and mother working to help women of childbearing age and children in her community.

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CHILDBIRTH IN PICHON: AN ORDEAL FOR MOTHERS

Pregnancy and childbirth is a difficult time for both the mother and the child. The risks of complications are numerous, and even if the child is born safely, it is particularly vulnerable to diseases. This is exceptionally hard in areas where access to health care is difficult. These challenges are a daily reality for mothers living in Pichon. Because mothers often don't have access to accurate pregnancy and childbirth precautions, witches are often blamed for a miscarriage.

The SCOPE Project is recruiting and training health workers in the community to address misinformation. Louis Suzette is one of these agents who visits pregnant women, women of childbearing age and households with young children to support these women and children with information and prenatal care. In the short time of her work, she has already seen how her work has helped to create change in her community.

COMMITTED TO SERVING THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN HER COMMUNITY

Louis Suzette is a 33 years old mother living in Pichon and has experienced the challenges that many women in her community have experienced during pregnancy. Families often discourage mothers from going to the doctor because there is a common belief that vaccines given to pregnant women cause miscarriages. As a result, going to the doctor is out of the question, and most families refer to the local voodoo priest. As a result, many women die during childbirth or give birth to children who live no longer than a few months.

Louis Suzette could have been one of these women. However, she was lucky enough to be part of World Relief's *Family For Life* project. During her pregnancies,

the group leader advised her to access medical care. This is how she gave birth to four children (three boys and one girl) who are all in good health today.

Even though everything went well for her, Louis Suzette remained concerned about the many child deaths in her community. She noticed that children often died of fever, malnutrition, diarrhea, and flu. To help, she volunteered as a Sunday school teacher and devoted part of her worship time to teaching the children hygiene principles. But Louis Suzette felt that she could do more for her community but lacked the information and tools to educate women effectively.

Earlier this year, she heard about SCOPE, Louis Suzette immediately wanted to participate. Under the guidance of her supervisor, she has conducted home visits, community meetings and rallies to provide counseling to women. Each time, dozens of women gather to listen and ask questions. Just like her before, these women are looking for information. Through Louis Suzette's work, awareness is raised, and women are channeled to the health facilities for appropriate care.

Louis shared her experiences with SCOPE: "SCOPE does not pay someone to go around

the community with a megaphone, but makes sure that pregnant women and their families receive a visit not only from the community health worker but also from the Integral Mission Servants."

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS ENGAGING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Community health workers, or Agent de Santé Communautaire Polyvalents as their known in Haiti, are trusted neighbors who live in the communities they serve and making health care accessible to their community in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way. Community health workers work hand in hand with the Integral Mission Servants – church volunteers who go out into the community to teach and lessons on health – to connect them to the health services available in the region.

By the end of 2024, 35 community health workers in Haiti will be trained on Ministry of Health reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health and family planning curriculum. These 35 SCOPE-trained community health workers will, in turn, reach over 17,500 community members with these messages.

This story is written by Pierre Mackendy, World Relief South East Regional Coordinator.