

SCOPE SUCCESS STORY

MALAWI



Juwakina held by her mom after being released from the Hospital where she was refereed.

USAID/World Relief: Photo by Andrew Banda, World Relief

NAME AND ROLE

Albert Mtandika, Senior health Surveillance Assistant and Juwakina, newborn

LOCATION

Mtiza, Khongoni Traditional Authority, Malawi

SUMMARY

SCOPE is saving lives by supporting community-facility linkages in hard-to-reach areas through health surveillance agents.

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A STITCH IN TIME: PROPER COMMUNITY LINKAGES PROVIDING LIFESAVING SUPPORT

Juwakina, now two months, was born prematurely at home in Mtiza village. With a small population of 2,902, Mtiza village lies isolated between two valleys of Msuka and Maoni in traditional authority Khongoni in Lilongwe. Mtiza is isolated geographically but more critically isolated from the daily essentials of primary health care. The nearest rural hospital is 70 kilometers away, and motorcycle taxis are too expensive, so the distance must be walked by foot.

Because of this physical isolation, people from Mtiza and surrounding villages often have to make choices without the insights of professional health workers, which can cause uncertainty, loss and shame. It can feel crippling, tiresome, and hopeless for residents.

The Strengthening Community Health Outcomes Through Positive Engagement (SCOPE) is working to restore hope by training health personnel to manage primary health care at the community level. When primary health care supervision is strengthened, and proper referral systems are developed, lives can be saved.

HEALTH SURVEILLANCE AGENTS SUPPORTING JUWAKINA'S EARLY BIRTH

Upon hearing of Juwakina's arrival, Senior Health Surveillance Assistant Albert Mtandika of Chilobwe Health Center attended the call. Mtandika has dedicated most of his time assisting women in the village and was recently trained by the SCOPE on Community Based Maternal Neonatal Care (CBMNC).

Knowing the traditions of the village from his long stay

there, Matandika knew that Juwakina would not be taken to the hospital. Her parents could not afford the cost, but they also did not understand that infants like Juwakina can survive when referred to proper care in time.

“I had to use what I was trained to do, I first of all counselled the parents, explained to them; that with proper medical attention Juwakina could improve, I then prepared them a referral, it was never easy but eventually Juwakina was taken to Kabudula Rural Hospital.”

- Mtandik, Senior Health Surveillance Assistant

COMMUNITY-BASED MATERNAL AND NEONATAL SUPPORT

Under the Community Based Maternal Neonatal Child Health package, health workers are trained on the importance of timely referrals when and if cases require secondary care. “I

would like to thank the SCOPE project for their holistic approach to training. Apart from CBMNC, I have received other trainings on Family Planning and Integrated Community Case Management which have seen me contributing much to primary health care of my area” Explains the visibly joyful Mtandika.

“Juwakina is home now. She lives with no danger signs anymore. If we had not taken heed of the advice from the health worker, I believe this would not have been possible,” Eveness, an Auntie to Juwakina, adds.

As of June 2021, the SCOPE Project has trained 104 Health workers in CBMNC, 164 in Family Planning and 125 in ICCM. The figure is likely to increase as refresher training happens and Juwakina is living proof that increased access to primary health is key to reducing maternal and child mortality rates.

This story is written by Charles Fwataki, SCOPE Malawi Project Coordinator and Ezekiel Zifa, World Relief.