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SCOPE SUCCESS STORY

HAITI



Berline Joseph and her five-year-old son at their home in Mapou.

USAID/World Relief: Photo by Pierre Mackendy, Field Coordinator

NAME AND ROLE

Berline Joseph, mother

LOCATION

Sud Est, Belle Anse, Mapou, Haiti

SUMMARY

SCOPE helps a community health worker make a difference in the lives of young mother Berline Joseph and her neighbors by connecting them with locally available medical resources.

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RAISING FAMILY HEALTH AWARENESS IN A HARD-TO-REACH COMMUNITY

In Haiti, access to women's reproductive health and children's health services continue to remain critical issues at both the national and community levels. Because of this need, the SCOPE project works with health service providers to train agents de santé communautaire polyvalent (ASCPs, Haiti's cadre of community health workers), strengthen policies to improve access to services, and increase demand for services by educating mothers and caregivers about preventive measures and health behavior change.

In Belle Anse, one of the poorest areas in the country, access to health care remains a great challenge. Healthcare options for residents of many towns in this area include small, under-equipped and understaffed health centers. In Mapou, SCOPE partners have helped a woman named Berline Joseph better understand her family's healthcare options and spread awareness throughout her community.

BEHAVIOR CHANGE MESSAGES IMPROVE A FAMILY'S HEALTH

Berline Joseph is a 30-year-old woman living in Mapou with her husband and two sons, ages eleven and five. Berline often felt overwhelmed knowing how to keep them healthy. She relied on the customs and traditions she had learned from her mother, many of which often provided little medical help. For example, she had been taught that herbal tea was a cure-all for childhood sickness, even in situations usually requiring a hospital visit. Financial challenges made these home remedy solutions even more appealing. However, meeting with health workers in her community changed Berline's perspective.

Although initially skeptical of the health worker because of misconceptions regarding aid work in the area, Berline was pleasantly surprised by the information she received. Through bi-monthly meetings with the health worker, she gained useful health behavior knowledge that she immediately applied at home. Berline learned how to maintain a safe, sanitary, and hygienic home environment. She made adjustments and began to encourage her family to wash hands regularly. She took protective measures against mosquito-borne diseases, including buying mosquito nets. She learned to prioritize preventative wellness checks for her young children at their local health clinic rather than waiting for serious sickness to set in before seeking medical attention.

These learnings have improved Berline's home life and made it easier for her to access the health facilities available. As she applies these lessons, their impact continues to spread throughout her community. Since meeting with the health worker, her family has stayed relatively healthy. As Berline Joseph shared:

"I can say that I learned new things and that now I am a mother much better able to watch over the health of her children."

- *Berline Joseph*

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGHOUT
BELLE ANSE AND BEYOND

Following her meetings with the community health worker, Berline has passed on valuable insights to other mothers in her community. One of the most impactful conversations she had with her neighbors centered on the topic of family planning. Traditional and faith perspectives in the community had shaped viewpoints around this issue. Children are viewed as gifts from God so community members were hesitant to discuss family planning methods and were unreceptive to the health worker's advice about birth control. They were, however, more willing to listen to Berline's ideas on the subject since she is a trusted community member. Using the health worker's advice as a guide and sharing lessons from personal experience, Berline help her neighbors understand the relevance and importance of family planning within their religious context. As a result, many in her community have shifted their perspectives on this issue and are making changes to improve family health.

Berline and many other young women in Belle Anse have seen their living conditions improve due to the direct action of SCOPE-supported community health workers. Working together, they are improving health for women and children in communities throughout Haiti.

This story is written by Pierre Mackendy, Regional Coordinator, and Elizabeth Cooper, SCOPE Communications Intern.