

SCOPE HIV SUCCESS STORY

Malawi



Sinoya Pane, Male Champion Promoter who is working to improve access to HIV care and treatment in his community.

USAID/World Relief: Photo by Sinoya Pane, Male Champion Promoter, Machinga

NAME AND ROLE

Sinoya Pane, Male Champion Promoter

LOCATION

Machinga/Traditional Authority Chikweo, Malawi

SUMMARY

SCOPE HIV helps a Male Champion Promoter address a culture of mistreatment by service providers when clients try to access HIV treatment at a government health post.

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MALE CHAMPIONS IMPROVE ACCESS TO TREATMENT AND CARE FOR HIV POSITIVE CLIENTS

SCOPE HIV provides evidence-based approaches to help Malawi achieve its 95-95-95 goal. The UNAIDS goal seeks to have 95% of people living with HIV know their status, 95% of people who know their status are on treatment, and 95% of people on treatment achieve viral suppression. The government of Malawi is making efforts in health care provision, but to achieve this critical goal barriers to care and treatment must be addressed. These barriers include gender, culture, religion and institutional barriers. In the case of Traditional Authority Chikweo, the poor treatment of some HIV positive by health service providers at a health post

CLIENTS EXPERIENCE BIAS AS THEY SEEK OUT CARE CAUSES A DEFAULT IN TREATMENT

The treatment of clients is a critical aspect of the work, as poor treatment can cause clients not to want to return, despite the risks to their health. Zione and Esther (aliases used to protect their privacy) were two clients whose experience with bias caused them to default on their care. Zione, age 42, and Esther, age 33, stopped taking their antiretroviral treatments due to a lack of a client-centered approach.

Zione's relapse in treatment began when she missed her date for collecting drugs at the health post. Zione is partially deaf and illiterate, and she misheard her appointment date and had trouble reading the details on her health passport book. She returned days after her medication had finished, and when she arrived, she was

shouted at by the officer responsible for dispersing the antiretroviral treatment. They also threw her health passport book thrown away. Because of her treatment, she resolved never to return, thus ending her antiretroviral treatment. When SCOPE HIV began work in her community, she hadn't received treatment in almost four years.

On the other hand, Esther defaulted treatment when an officer responsible for distributing antiretroviral treatments shouted at her because her two-year-old child had an accident and peed on the floor. According to Esther, the officer threw away her health passport book and told her, "don't you ever come here again, you filthy and unhygienic woman." Esther, too vowed to go back for medication. Both women are examples of how unkind and unethical treatment of clients hinders access to HIV care and treatment, despite the availability and affordability of services.

THE ROLE OF A MALE CHAMPION PROMOTERS IN FACILITATING REACCESS TO HIV CARE AND TREATMENT

SCOPE HIV's Male Champion volunteers are men who are living with HIV and have been trained in how to provide HIV counseling to clients who have tested positive. As peers who are open about their status, they are valuable resources to those who are learning about their

status or are returning to care. One of their critical roles is identifying barriers to access to HIV treatment and care in their communities.

For this reason, Sinoya, a SCOPE HIV-trained Male Champion Promoter Zione and Esther's community identified this poor treatment by staff leading to antiretroviral treatment default at his local health post. Using the skills he was equipped with during Male Champions training and the mentorship, Sinoya followed up on Zione and Esther to establish facts about what happened for them to start defaulting. Based on what he heard, he decided to engage the health facility's Officer-In-Charge, who was not aware of the maltreatment that other HIV-positive clients suffered from health personnel. The Officer-In-Charge apologized on behalf of his staff members and engaged the officers who were scaring away clients at the clinic.

Sinoya's actions improved service provision at the health post, and a client-centered approach was adopted. Zione, Esther and others who faced similar abuse returned to care.

Returning to care is critical in helping to achieve Malawi's 95-95-95 goals. Through Male Champions like Sinoya, SCOPE HIV has helped 1,976 people return to care.

This story is written by Macdonald Chimlaza, Gender and Child Protection Technical Officer