

# SCOPE SUCCESS STORY

## KENYA



Joyce Wanjiku, a community health volunteer, shares during a Care Group session in Lekurruki.

USAID/World Relief: Photo by Stella Odaba, Care Group Supervisor

### NAME AND ROLE

Tujiweze Care Group

### LOCATION

Olkeri Ward, Kajiado North Sub-county, Kajiado County

### SUMMARY

SCOPE addresses child mortality and morbidity in Kajiado Country through Care Groups and community health volunteers partner to provide behavior change messaging for mothers.

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## CARE GROUPS AND COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEERS PARTNER TOGETHER TO REDUCE RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES

In Kenya, respiratory diseases are the second leading cause of death among children under five. This is partly due to preventable environmental factors, such as smoke from indoor cooking and secondhand smoke from cigarettes. The smoke, alongside issues with complementary feeding due to less-than-optimal breastfeeding practices and lower immunity in children due to low vaccination rates, bolsters Kenya's under-five child mortality rate.

SCOPE is working to address these challenges through Care Groups: groups of 10-15 volunteer community-based health educators who regularly meet with project staff for training and supervision. These Care Group Volunteers and community health volunteers usually meet bi-weekly to share key disease prevention and health promotion messages at the household level.

### CARE GROUP LESSONS HELP COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEERS PROVIDE TIMELY SUPPORT FOR MOTHERS IN TUJIWEZE

Community health volunteers are critical partners in Kenya's health system. They provide basic prevention and care services in their communities. Joyce Wanjiku Ndungu is a community health volunteer who works on the slopes of Ngong Hills, Olkeri Ward, in Kajiado North. Known for its cold and dry climate with cool foggy mornings, Olkeri Ward's climate makes an ideal environment for respiratory infections. In addition to her role as a community health volunteer, Joyce also is a SCOPE-trained Care Group

Promoter. As a Promoter, she mobilizes Care Group Volunteers to share monthly health lessons on maternal and child health. Joyce takes pride in educating her community about disease prevention. Coupled with her work alongside Care Groups, her influence in Olkeri Ward has multiplied.

Risper first met Joyce during a Tujiweze Care Group meeting. Risper organizes Care Group Volunteers as the lead volunteer, arranging the meeting venue and mobilizing them for meetings. She also ensures they meet their target neighbors to cascade Care Group messages.



Members of Tujiweze Care Group in Lekurruki with their newly acquired KOKO cookers.

USAID/World Relief: Photo by Stella Odaba, Care Group Supervisor

Care Group lessons have been critical in addressing common childhood illnesses that the community in Olkeri Ward faces. Risper explains that through Care Group meetings, “We discovered the warning signs of pneumonia when we notice our children shivering, complaining of chest pain, constantly coughing, breathing quickly as if they have just finished a race, or having chest in drawing where the chest sinks below the ribs when the

child breathes in. This child is in danger, and we should quickly rush them to the hospital for quick medical attention.” Risper explained that breastfeeding practices can help reduce respiratory infections: “We also learned that it is important to exclusively breastfeed our children from birth to six months and continue breastfeeding until the baby is 24 months old. This is critical for reducing the burden of pneumonia and other respiratory tract infections among infants and young children below five years. Indoor smoke causes respiratory diseases; therefore, we should send our children outside if we are cooking using fossil fuels and also keep them far from those who are smoking tobacco.”

### IMPACTING HOUSEHOLDS BY ENDING INDOOR SMOKE

Because of their learnings, Care Group members and many of their neighbors decided to invest in safer options for cooking by purchasing KOKO, a safe no-spill affordable ethanol two-burner cooker. To invest, each Care Group member contributed money twice a month. In addition to finding safer cooking methods, Care Group volunteers have been sharing with their neighbors about the health risks to children when cooking inside without the windows open. Some have even added new kitchen windows to provide adequate ventilation by letting the smoke out.

Across Kenya, SCOPE works with 673 Care Groups comprised of 6,042 Care Group Volunteers trained in child health. These volunteers, in turn, have reached 18,723 households in their communities with child health messages.

*This story is written by Stella Odaba and Adrian Simiyu.*