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SCOPE SUCCESS STORY

KENYA



A renovated old house that is used now as maternity room.

USAID/World Relief: Photo by John Epiding M&E Assistant Turkana

NAME AND ROLE

Kokuro Health Center

LOCATION

Lapur Ward, Kibish Sub-county,
Turkana County

SUMMARY

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

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CARE GROUPS AND COMMUNITY HEALTH FACILITY PARTNER TOGETHER TO INCREASE FACILITY DELIVERY

Childbirth in a health facility with a skilled birth attendant is associated with lower maternal morbidity and mortality rates than home births. Delivery in a health facility is also critical in preventing stillbirths and improving newborn survival. It is for these reasons that SCOPE focuses on women of reproductive age's use of family planning and reproductive health services and increasing the use of primary health care services for children under five.

To achieve this, SCOPE works with Care Groups, groups of 10-15 volunteer community-based health educators who meet with project staff regularly for training and supervision. Care Group Volunteers and community health volunteers (Care Group Promoters) typically meet biweekly to share key disease prevention and health promotion messages in homes. The Promoters refer pregnant women to health facilities for antenatal care services, followed by strict follow-up and reporting monthly until the baby is delivered at the health facility.

COMMUNITIES AND CARE GROUPS PARTNERING TOGETHER TO DEVELOP KOKURO HEALTH CENTER

Kokuro Health Center is a critical health space in Lapur ward, Kibish sub-county. The ward has a population of 4,047, with women of reproductive age totaling 898. This health facility has one community unit that employs 13 community health volunteers trained by SCOPE on community-based maternal, newborn, child health, and family planning. Of these 13, seven also participate in SCOPE Care Groups as Promoters.



Inside maternity room, well-equipped with a delivery bed and deliver pole.

USAID/World Relief: Photo by John Epiding M&E Assistant Turkana

Initially, women of reproductive age in Kokuro Community Unit sought antenatal and postnatal care services but never considered delivering in the health facility. This was because the hospital practices – such as delivering while lying down, disposing of the placenta, and male birth attendants who were doctors assisting with the birth – made mothers uncomfortable. However, by engaging in Care Groups, women began to understand the reasons behind the practices, and the number of skilled deliveries at the facility level has increased. In summer 2022 alone, the number of skilled deliveries was 33 – high compared to previous months and years. The number of antenatal care visits also increased.

FACILITATING BROADER CHANGE IN KIBISH

The increased number of skilled deliveries has facilitated broader changes in the sub-county. Beyond the mothers and babies who have had safe deliveries, the uptick attracted more funding (from the Linda Mama Programme) to renovate the old building into a maternity facility. The facility is equipped with a delivery couch and a pole solely for those not comfortable delivering lying down.

Despite being the most isolated and interior part of Turkana, the number of skilled deliveries tracked on the District Health Information System has steadily increased in Kibish sub-county, surpassing the number in Turkana North.

Learning about safer practices for preventing childhood illnesses, screening and referring unwell children to health facilities, post-partum family planning, postnatal care for the baby, and danger signs of pregnancy through SCOPE Care Groups has been critical to this success. By the end of 2024, through SCOPE Kenya, 3,870 Care Group volunteers reaching out to 6 of their neighbors are expected to reach 23,220 households with reproductive, maternal, newborn, child health and family planning social and behavior change communication messages.

This story is written by John Epiding, Emanuel Etole and Confrida Esekon.