

SCOPE SUCCESS STORY

MALAWI



Joel Malanga, a health surveillance assistant in Khongoni traditional authority, counsels a new family on the newborn care.

USAID/World Relief: Photo by Happy Katuli, World Relief.

NAME AND ROLE

Joel Malanga, health surveillance assistant

LOCATION

Khongoni Traditional Authority, Malawi

SUMMARY

SCOPE-trained health surveillance assistants like Joel Malango are helping families receive community-based maternal and newborn care in Khongoni.

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SCOPE PROJECT IMPROVING CARE FOR THE NEWBORN AT HOME

Khongoni Traditional Authority covers the largest southern part of Lilongwe. It is densely populated, with arable land and a flat landscape for farming. Because of this vastness, Khongoni Traditional Authority comprises of multiple small villages. Despite its large size and population, Khongoni has only three health facilities – Chilobwe, Khongoni and Malembo – making access to health services difficult.

Kambauwa village is one of the many villages in Khongoni that has registered many maternal deaths. The long distances to reach health facilities, poor road networks, and deep-seated traditional beliefs contribute to this high maternity rate.

SCOPE PROVIDING CHANGE IN KHONGONI TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY

SCOPE is addressing this issue by supporting the Ministry of Health in training community health workers (called health surveillance workers) to reduce preventable maternal and child deaths. Community health workers work with parents to assess, treat, and refer sick children. Through this support, SCOPE is improving community health-seeking behaviors and the quality of community health services provided by community health workers.

This training consists of integrated community case management (ICCM), which includes assessing, treating, and referring to health facilities; community-based maternal, neonatal, and child health; and community-based family planning.

Joel Malanga is a health surveillance assistant who helped Alineti give birth. Since then, he has continued to provide support to Alineti. Alineti shared that Joel's visits are producing "good fruits" in their area, which in turn are

producing “everlasting results in maternal and child care.” Alineti went on to share about the transformations in her pregnancy journey with the help and encouragement of Joel.

HELPING NEW MOTHERS CARE FOR THEIR BABIES AFTER CHALLENGES

This was not Alineti’s first pregnancy. She had a baby in 2017 and a miscarriage in 2019. Due to a lack of health personnel in their area, giving birth to a healthy child was not easy. This time when she realized she was pregnant, Alineti approached her community health surveillance assistant Joel for help. Throughout her pregnancy, Joel made three home visits and guided her on how to remain healthy during her pregnancy.

After the birth, Joel visited twice to ensure both mother and baby were healthy. During the home visits, Joel counseled Alineti on special newborn care, the importance of HIV testing, the need to use mosquito nets and the need to have a balanced diet. Alineti’s baby was underweight when she was born, but through

Joel’s continued support, the baby was soon a healthy weight. Joel continued to conduct subsequent visits to ensure that the child was well taken care of, and as we speak, the child has grown up very well and received the required vaccinations.

Alineti thanked the SCOPE project and the Ministry of Health for ensuring extra care for both the newly born and the mother. Through Joel’s support, health care was brought close to the people in their locality without traveling long distances, and a life was saved.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Through the help of SCOPE-trained health surveillance assistants, Kambauwa village has seen a significant drop in maternal deaths. Pregnant women and newborn babies are well cared for and supported in their communities.

This story was captured by Mr. Ezekiel Zifa, Project Supervisor for Khongoni Traditional Authority, with the help of Joel Malanga, Health Surveillance Assistant for Malembo Health Center.