

SCOPE SUCCESS STORY

HAITI



Junia Saint-Cyr meeting with a SCOPE Monitoring & Evaluation Assistant in the Fonfrède Health Center.

USAID/World Relief: Photo by Lesly Laurent

NAME AND ROLE

Junia Saint-Cyr, community health worker

LOCATION

Sud, Fonfrède, Cayes

SUMMARY

Junia Saint-Cyr is a SCOPE-supported community health worker who is leading by example as she applies the lessons she teaches her clients to her own life.

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STRONGER COMMUNITY IMPACT AS COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Community health workers, called agents de santé communautaire polyvalents in Haiti, work to improve access to health services in their communities. These community health workers provide education and work to change people's behavior around family planning, child illness, maternal health, newborn health, antenatal care and postnatal care. In their daily work, community health workers visit mothers to provide antenatal, postpartum, and newborn care, and conduct vaccinations for children. Community health workers also provide referrals to health facilities for more challenging cases.

In Les Cayes, 27 community health workers work in three communal sections: Fonfrède, Laborde, and Laurent. Through community health worker home visits, community members in remote areas of Fonfrède are now linked to health services. Junia Saint-Cyr is one of the SCOPE-supported community health workers working tirelessly to transform the lives of those she serves.

A LOCAL NURSE NOTICES FEARS AND MISCONCEPTIONS IN HER COMMUNITY

Born in the community she oversees, Junia Saint-Cyr is one of eight children in her family. Junia is a trained nurse, but she has been one of the SCOPE-supported community health workers in Les Cayes for the past year.

In the community Junia works in, there are a lot of misconceptions about maternal health and family planning. Women often do not go to the hospital when they are pregnant or bring their children there for regular care. Mothers often do not vaccinate their children because they vaccinate their children because they believe vaccinations make them sick. Family planning is also frowned upon

because it is considered a practice not approved by God.

CHANGE YOURSELF FIRST TO CHANGE YOUR COMMUNITY

Though Junia knew some of the best practices to keep her and her family healthy, she sometimes did not apply all the advice she provided to her community. She used to drink non-potable water, usually due to negligence, but as a community health worker, she started to pay more attention to these practices. As she worked as a community health worker, Junia realized that these lessons did not just apply to those she was educating, but also applied to her and her family. Junia shared this realization: "If I'm teaching people in my community how to take care of themselves and their children, I have to be an example for them not only by my words but also by my actions."

Once Junia made changes to her own practices, her community started to transform as well. With Junia's services, the community of Fonfrède changed its behavior and beliefs. People started using contraception to better plan their families. They started implementing better hygiene principles, such as washing their hands and drinking potable water. Some even started bringing their children to health facilities to get vaccinated.

THE CHALLENGE

In Junia's community, there was a pregnant mother of seven. This mother had given birth to all seven children at home and did not want to change her mind about home birth. She also had never received prenatal or antenatal care, and when Junia tried to talk about antenatal care and family planning, the mother refused to engage.

After several visits, Junia convinced her to go to the hospital. When she arrived, the doctor assessed her and realized that the baby was not growing well in utero and told her that she could lose the baby if she doesn't make changes. Through the help of the doctor and the community health worker, everything went well. The mother and baby are in good health, and the mother continues to see Junia during her visits.

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES ONE HEALTH WORKER AT A TIME

SCOPE is working with community health workers across Haiti to help increase the demand for services. By the end of 2024, 60 community health workers will reach mothers and caretakers across Haiti on preventative health measures in family planning, maternal, child and newborn health.

*This story is written by Lindberg Julien,
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