



## Courageous community leaders go above and beyond to fight tuberculosis one patient at a time

When Mr. Ritte and Mr. Kiondo from Machame Narumu-Hai, Tanzania first decided to become community resources to fight tuberculosis (TB), they didn't realize the power their roles would hold. With funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), PATH trained the men to identify and refer community members with TB symptoms to diagnostic facilities, to support patients, and to provide correct information about TB throughout the community.



Photo: PATH

To maximize their impact, Mr. Ritte and Mr. Kiondo decided to team up. Every community member that Mr. Kiondo identified to be at risk for TB was taken to Mr. Ritte for documentation and referral. This effort not only helped ensure that each case was recorded in the health care system but also provided potential TB patients with access to health services.

To ensure the collaboration of health facilities in the area, Mr. Ritte, at his own expense, visited Kisiki Health Centre in Kilimanjaro to meet with health workers and explain how to identify TB symptoms. He also served as a patient advocate and reiterated the importance of how to treat patients once they arrive at the health facility, as well as the importance of addressing other concerns, such

as cost. Since his first visit to this health facility, Mr. Kiondo makes regular visits to the health centers to check on the status of those he has referred, and support those who are reluctant to go for testing and assist them with treatment.

Mr. Ritte and Mr. Kiondo helped to refer nine people during one quarter, two of whom were diagnosed to have TB disease. In addition, Kisiki Health Centre has become increasingly cooperative with community supporters and instituted measures to ensure that those who are referred for diagnosis and treatment are well treated by providers.

Recently, Mr. Ritte received training to provide an additional service to the community, as a sputum fixer. In this role, he is able to safely collect sputum samples from those thought to have lung TB, and delivers them to the nearest health facility for testing. He also helps inform patients who live far from the health facility of their results, and helps ensure continued treatment. In an effort to foster the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of TB, the Tanzanian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare is increasingly cultivating community resources like Mr. Ritte and Mr. Kiondo to improve case detection and treatment success. PATH, with USAID funding, has increased their work and influence through community activities in many districts throughout Tanzania.

### For more information

To learn more about PATH's work in Tanzania, please contact Dr. Zahra Mkomwa at [zmkomwa@path.org](mailto:zmkomwa@path.org). To learn more about USAID's work in TB, please contact Elizabeth Pleuss at [epleuss@usaid.gov](mailto:epleuss@usaid.gov).

This document was prepared for the United States Agency for International Development's Bureau of Global Health Tuberculosis Task Order by PATH.

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