



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Tackling tuberculosis and HIV in Tanzania: A story of hope



Dauseni William Pallangyo is a farmer in Patanda, Arumeru District, in the Arusha region of Tanzania. For months, he suffered a heavy cough, chest pain, night sweats, and fevers, and wondered what kind of illness he had.

“I was not sure of what I was suffering from, whether tuberculosis, HIV, or both,” he said. This uncertainty stopped Dauseni from going to seek help.

After several months, Dauseni made it to the hospital for treatment. There, a health worker diagnosed him with tuberculosis (TB) and recommended that he also be tested for HIV.

The hospital offered free TB and HIV services, so Dauseni was able to get tested for both during the same visit. Dauseni soon learned that he was not HIV-positive.

“After knowing what I was suffering from, I was started on anti-TB medication,” Dauseni said. “Since then, my condition has improved significantly.”

INTEGRATED SERVICES, IMPROVED CARE

Dauseni is among the growing number of people in Tanzania who are benefiting from integrated TB and HIV services. With funding from the US Agency for International Development (USAID), PATH supports the country’s National TB and Leprosy Program to implement TB–HIV collaborative activities in 35 districts across the country. PATH helps to bring TB and HIV services together in one facility and ensure access to testing and drug supplies, making it easier for people like Dauseni to get all the care they need in one place.

“When we started this work with USAID in 2005, only about 10 percent of patients with TB were screened for HIV,” said Dr. Zahra Mkomwa, PATH’s TB–HIV project director in Tanzania. “As TB is a leading cause of death in people who have HIV, finding these cases of patients who have TB and HIV is critical to saving lives.”

Now, almost 90 percent of patients at TB clinics in districts where PATH is working are screened



PATH/Darin Zehrung

for HIV. With support from USAID, PATH's work extends to 955 health facilities, which serve much of the Tanzanian population.

SOLUTIONS FOR A DUAL EPIDEMIC

Around the world, the dual epidemics of TB and HIV infect and kill millions each year. People with HIV are more at risk of developing active TB disease and, when infected with TB, are more likely to die. TB is more difficult to diagnose in people with HIV, but because these patients become sicker more quickly it is critical to identify them early.

In Tanzania, an estimated 47 percent of TB patients are co-infected with HIV. The country has the world's 14th highest burden of TB. Support from the national government and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, community-based organizations, and the communities themselves are essential for combating TB and creating effective strategies to generate awareness about the dual epidemic and reduce stigma that may prevent people from seeking testing or treatment. PATH also trains community volunteers called sputum fixers to help people who live far from diagnostic centers. The volunteers collect and transport samples of sputum to test for TB. They educate people about TB and TB-HIV co-infection and refer them to health facilities for care.

PATH's efforts in Tanzania focus on improving the lives of people like Dauseni by integrating high-quality TB and HIV services. We work closely with the Ministry of Health and other partners to train and mentor health care providers on providing coordinated services for people suffering from both TB and HIV.

Dauseni finished his treatment for TB, and today he is well on his way to recovery. He has resumed farming and is earning a living for his family, without the burden of poor health.

PATH'S WORK IN TB-HIV AROUND THE WORLD

With funding and support from USAID, PATH:

- Provides training for health care providers in counseling, testing, treatment, and support for people who have TB and HIV.
- Procures essential drugs, supplies and test kits.
- Engages private-sector providers in identifying TB and TB-HIV cases earlier.
- Coordinates with governments to bring together members of national TB programs, national AIDS programs, and civil society to ensure coordination between TB and HIV services and communities.

TB/HIV patients speak out

To hear their stories and learn more please visit:
www.path.org/projects/photovoice.php

For more information

To learn more about PATH's work in Tanzania, please contact Dr. Zahra Mkomwa at zmkomwa@path.org or visit www.path.org/tuberculosis.php. To learn more about USAID's work in TB, please contact Elizabeth Pleuss at 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.

About PATH

For more information, please visit www.path.org.