



I HAD NEVER BEEN TO A CLINIC - SAIDI'S WAKE UP CALL THAT SAVED TWO LIVES



► SILENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

In the serene village of Kidoka, nestled in Chemba District, Dodoma region, lives 54-year-old Saidi Petrol. A father of four, including a 4-year-old, and husband to his devoted wife, Mr. Saidi is well-versed in the routines of family life. However, like many men in his community, he had never recognized the critical role of accompanying his wife to the clinic for antenatal care (ANC).

► SOCIETY NORMS

Before six months ago, Mr. Saidi's situation reflected the prevailing norms in his community. Despite being a father of four, including a 4-year-old, he had never considered accompanying his wife to the clinic for antenatal care (ANC) during any of her previous pregnancies. In his village, pregnancy care was widely regarded as a woman's sole responsibility, a belief deeply rooted in cultural traditions and societal expectations.

► I HAD NEVER BEEN TO A CLINIC

For Mr. Saidi, his role as a husband was limited to providing basic needs, such as food and shelter while leaving his wife to manage her health independently. This lack of involvement meant he remained unaware of the dangers of delaying ANC visits, such as increased risks of complications for both the mother and baby. He didn't understand the significance of early and regular medical checkups or how critical his support could be in ensuring a safe pregnancy and healthy outcomes.



CLINIC VISITS ARE NOT JUST FOR WOMEN

For years, he simply did not know that his presence at these visits could play a vital role in protecting the well-being of both his wife and their unborn child.



THE POWER OF ONE VISIT

Everything changed when a Community Health Worker (CHW) named Fauzia visited Mr. Saidi's home. What began as an ordinary day turned into a transformative moment for him and his family. Fauzia greeted Mr. Saidi and his wife with warmth and respect, taking the time to sit with them and discuss vital information about safe childbirth and antenatal care (ANC).

She explained the dangers of delaying ANC visits, such as the increased risks of complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Fauzia emphasized the critical health screenings offered during ANC, including tests for HIV, syphilis, and other conditions that could affect both mother and baby. She highlighted how early detection and treatment during pregnancy could prevent severe outcomes, such as maternal mortality, low birth weight, and neonatal deaths.

Fauzia also shed light on the crucial role a partner plays in supporting their spouse during pregnancy. She explained that when partners accompany their wives to the clinic, it encourages early ANC bookings, ensures better adherence to medical advice, and fosters a sense of shared responsibility. This involvement not only strengthens the emotional bond between couples but also reduces stress for expectant mothers, promoting better physical and mental health outcomes.

For Mr. Saidi, this was the first time he understood the profound impact his active participation could have on his wife's health and their unborn child's well-being.

Fauzia's words ignited a sense of responsibility within him and helped him realize that being a supportive partner went beyond providing for the family, it also meant standing by his wife during her pregnancy journey.

This life-changing conversation marked the beginning of a new chapter, where Mr. Saidi would take a more proactive and engaged role in safeguarding his family's health.

Moved by Fauzia's passion and knowledge, Mr. Saidi made a promise: the next time his wife was pregnant, he would not only encourage early clinic visits but also accompany her. This was a bold commitment in a culture where such involvement was rare.

Months later, Mr. Saidi kept his word. When his wife became pregnant again, he made sure she booked her first clinic visit early before the pregnancy was 12 weeks old. On the day of the appointment, he walked with her to Kidoka Health Center, a small but vital lifeline for the community.

THE UNEXPECTED HERO



At the clinic, they were welcomed with priority care. The health professionals performed critical services, including HIV and syphilis testing, provided reproductive health education, and offered nutrition advice tailored for pregnant mothers.

Mr. Saidi watched attentively as his wife received malaria prevention medication and iron supplements to support the baby's growth. They were also briefed on the importance of regular follow-ups and instructed to return promptly if any concerns arose.

For Mr. Saidi, this experience was eye-opening. Not only did he see the direct benefits of these services, but he also felt pride in being an active participant in his wife's health journey. The kindness and professionalism of the clinic staff reassured him that his wife and unborn child were in good hands.

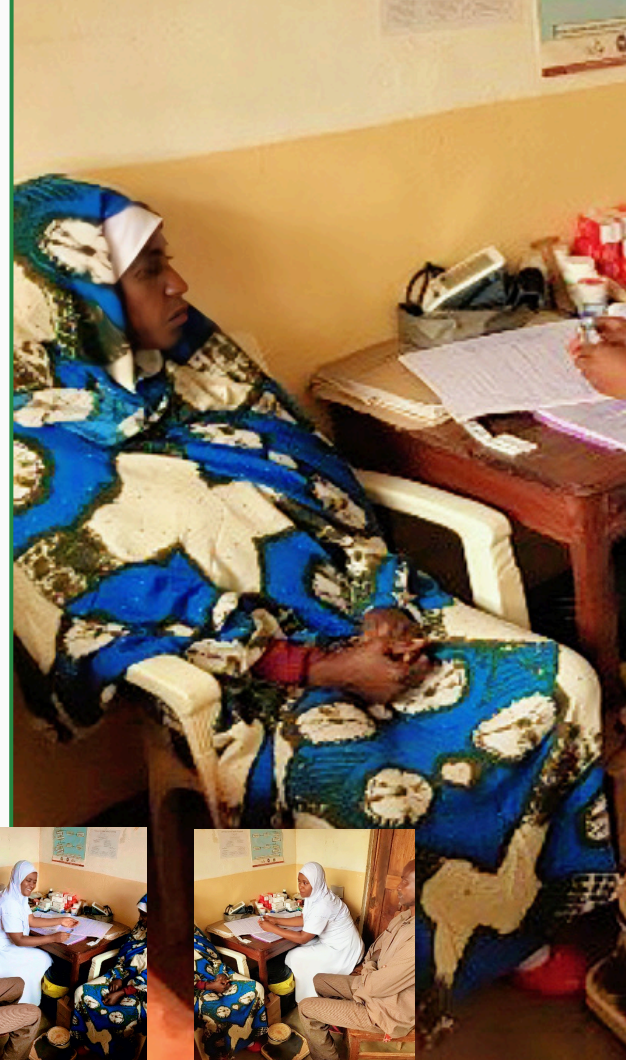
Reflecting on this experience

Mr. Saidi is deeply grateful to Fauzia, the CHW whose visit changed his perspective. Her guidance empowered him to take an active role in safeguarding his family's health.

Mr. Saidi's decision is part of a growing trend in Kidoka Village. Between April and June 2024, 109 pregnant women received ANC services at Kidoka Health Centre. Remarkably, 71% of them were accompanied by their partners a statistic that reflects a shifting mindset in the community.

For Mr. Saidi, this isn't just about numbers; it's about the bond he has strengthened with his wife and the assurance that their child will have the best start in life. His journey underscores the transformative power of awareness and the critical role of community health workers in shaping healthier futures.

If not for that CHW visit, i would still be in darkness. unaware of my responsibilities as a husband, and a father.



SAID PETROL WORDS



THIS IS THE STORY OF

A man who learned that true strength lies not in tradition but in the courage to embrace change for the ones we love.

