



TRANSPARENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT

## SOCIAL ACTION STORIES (TANZANIA)

*These stories were designed for the T4D initiative in collaboration with CHAI (Tanzania).*



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SOCIAL ACTION STORIES

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## STORY 1: INDIVIDUAL CHOICE

In some communities, people who are unhappy with the health care they are receiving choose to go to a different provider:

In some communities people were not pleased with the health service they were getting. For example, people in areas of Kilindi said that their local dispensary was sometimes closed because the staff were travelling, and the dispensary was left without any staff present. Even when the dispensary was open important medicines were often not in stock. After becoming tired of this, villagers decided to travel a longer distance to seek services at a different dispensary. Some villagers also shared information about the quality of the different dispensaries to help their neighbors choose the best dispensary to go to. Even though the other dispensary was further away it offered much better services, it was usually open and it had medicine in stock at all times. By doing this, villagers were always satisfied.



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## STORY 2: INDIVIDUAL COMPLAINT, PETITION OR SUPPLICATION

In some communities, people who are unhappy with the health care they are receiving complain to the providers or to officials and ask them to make improvements.

In some communities, people who are unhappy with the health care they are receiving complain to the providers or to officials and ask them to make improvements. For example, in Lindi region, patients were unhappy with the services at a health facility and the health facility wanted to be more responsive to the needs of its patients. The health facility set up a suggestion box where patients could anonymously write comments about quality of services at the health facility and provided recommendations to how situation could be rectified. At the end of every month, the health facility governing committee would empty the box, sit together to discuss the comments and find solutions. While not all of the patients' comments could be easily addressed, the patients did notice that the health facility was at least trying to make efforts to improve some of the services example: general cleanliness at the facility and the patients' satisfaction with the services provided by the health facility increased.



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### STORY 3: COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING AND MUTUAL COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENTING SOLUTIONS

In some communities, people who are unhappy with the health care they are receiving arrange for meetings with doctors and nurses or health officials. During these meetings, they work together to develop solutions to problems with health service delivery, and then they agree to implement those solutions.

In some communities in which people are dissatisfied with services that are provided they have had a meeting with local doctors, nurses or facility leadership to find a solution.

For example, in Tanga region, only a small number of mothers gave birth in the facility because a staff member was using bad language and had a negative attitude (using bad language, speaking angrily to women without reason and slandering pregnant women when they went to give birth). Some of the community members in this village, while they were motivating villagers on the importance of mother and child health, received complaints about the negative attitude of the staff at the dispensary.

They discussed with each other and chose some representatives who went to speak with this staff member, where she also put forward her complaints and they reached an agreement. She changed her ideas and began treating mothers and other patients politely. The number of women who go to deliver at the facility and take their children there has increased.



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## STORY 4: EXAMINING BETTER-PERFORMING SERVICES

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In some communities, people who are unhappy with the health care they are receiving visit places where health care is working better, so they can try to learn what they can do to improve their own health services. For example, in one district in Uganda, community members noticed that the clinic in their village was very poor, while the clinic in the neighboring district was much better. At the time their clinic was operating under unhygienic conditions in a house rented by the community with only two staff members serving around 4000 patients, while the clinic in the neighboring district had 5 staff members and better equipment. So they asked to meet with the medical officer in charge of the clinic about why the quality of their clinic was lower than in the neighboring district. During the meeting the health care workers learned about the community's concerns and the community members also came to better understand the problems facing the clinic. After better understanding the challenges faced at the community and health facility level, the community decided they needed to take action and successfully lobbied the district for funds to construct a new health clinic. The efforts were successful and a new clinic was built, four new members of staff were recruited, and new equipment was purchased. The clinic now serves 11,000 people. Of the women who have received antenatal services, 70 percent have returned to the clinic to give birth and receive more services, far surpassing the government target of 50 percent.



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## STORY 5: ASSEMBLING TOGETHER TO EXPRESS A DEMAND

Citizens could assemble to target underperforming providers or civil servants, like the district medical officer, who are not doing enough to improve health care.

In some communities, people who are unhappy with a situation freely gather to express a desire or demand to someone who is in a position to help resolve the issue. For example, there was a factory in Arusha region that was polluting the local community by spilling sewage, creating a smelly and unclean environment. The residents decided to gather together at the factory to ask the President of the company to make changes. Realizing the unhealthy impact of the pollution the President listened and promised to improve the situation by building sewage ponds to contain the waste. The residents were happy with this solution.



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## STORY 6: DEVELOPING AND WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE

People who are unhappy with the health care they are receiving could brainstorm solutions and then take those proposals to their fellow community members to be implemented. Sometimes they need to do this repeatedly, but eventually they get what they are asking for.

Some communities in Tanzania are working to ensure that the number of women going to the antenatal clinic or delivering at a facility is increasing. For example, one village in Tanga didn't have a private room for attending to pregnant women or an examination bed for examining them. To be examined, pregnant women would lie on the bench used for diagnosis and the room that was being used for this was the village office, where people come and go, without a door to prevent people from seeing inside. Many women didn't go there to be examined as a result of this lack of privacy. When community members discovered this, they went to the village leadership to ask for help motivating the community to contribute so they could obtain a private place and an examination bed, which could be used when attending to and examining pregnant women. After the village leadership made a public announcement to mobilize community contributions for this cause, other community members worked to educate people in the community on the importance of expectant mothers' clinic attendance for their health and the health of their new babies. Following the joint efforts between village leadership and the members of the community enough contributions were made that a room was rented and an examination bed bought. Because expectant mothers could now have privacy during their examinations the number of women who are attending the clinic has significantly increased.



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## STORY 7: TALKING TO JOURNALISTS / LOCAL MEDIA TO PUBLICIZE PROBLEMS

Often local journalists and media can be powerful allies in helping citizens publicize problems with health services, which can put pressure on underperforming service providers to improve.

In some communities, people who are unhappy with the available services engage the media to publicize problems. For example, there was a school in Iringa region that had no toilets for their students. The teachers had been lobbying the local government to release funds to have toilets built- but nothing happened. Tired of the lack of responsiveness, the teachers were able to relay their story to a newspaper and an article was written. After the media brought attention to the issue, the authorities were embarrassed by the situation and monies got released and the toilet was finally built.





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## STORY 8: WORKING THROUGH A 'BROKER' WHO COULD LINK COMMUNITY DEMANDS WITH ALLIES IN THE GOVERNMENT

A community that is unhappy with the quality of healthcare they are receiving can ask for help from a member of their community who is good at getting government officials to be responsive to community needs.

One community called Tuliza Moyo in Mara region was not satisfied with the services that were being provided by their local dispensary. They were treated with a negative attitude by the health care providers and there were delays for pregnant women receiving care when going for delivery at the facility, especially during the night. This challenge had been going on for a long time and had resulted in low attendance at the health facility and high maternal and infant mortality rates.

The community decided to find a person who could connect them to the dispensary board so that their challenges could be discussed. The intermediary organized a meeting with the dispensary board and the health worker was called in. The board looked for a way to solve the problems.

The meeting had big results, in that the health care providers have changed their attitude and have started providing women and other patients with good services. Attendance of mothers has since been good.



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## STORY 9: HIGHLIGHTING HIGH PERFORMING PROVIDERS

Citizens could reward high performing providers with praise or other social recognition.

In some places in Tanzania, high-performing staff (recognized by clients or their supervisors) are voted “Employee of the Week/Month”. Their picture is put on a wall in a public area with “Employee of the Month” so clients can see, and so that other employees are motivated to improve services so they too can be recognized. Patrons of these businesses have noted that worker motivation and services improved as the employees compete against each other for this coveted position of employee of the week/month.