



## First aid.

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Dr med Svend Capol  
President of SolidarMed

## Valuable house calls.

Not so long ago, primary health care here in Switzerland included house calls as a matter of course. Today, the future of the home visit has become a worrying question for many people. Those most dependant on such visits are the weakest in a society: mostly older, neglected people with multiple diseases, people in difficult social circumstances or single mothers with young children.

Then, when our resources were very limited too, patients were cared for by people close to them: by a knowledgeable grandmother, an experienced midwife and a broadly trained general practitioner. Health care followed the delivery principle and was provided where the patients were. And not only health care worked like this. Many might remember the grocery van which regularly passed through the village offering a basic assortment of goods for sale.

In the remote district of Ulanga, people depend on this delivery principle. This is why SolidarMed trained community health workers which bring essential knowledge about everyday ailments and illnesses closer to the people. Thanks to these house calls, mothers are better able to deal with the health problems of their youngest. With this system of outpatient medical care, SolidarMed also offers decentralised home-based treatment which ensures that patients regularly take life-saving medication.

Where necessary, community health workers will help refer patients to the next clinic, where well-trained health professionals take over.

We've been confronted in the past months with tragic images of people who had to leave their homeland because they had no other choice. Fleeing is a (false) solution in response to a lack of alternatives. We don't want to let things go so far. In our project areas, we tackle challenges early on. With your help, SolidarMed contributes to solving problems locally, where possible before they even arise.

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SolidarMed is the Swiss organisation for health in Africa and improves health care for 1.5 million people. SolidarMed strengthens and expands existing medical services sustainably and meaningfully. The projects pay particular attention to the health of mothers, pregnant women, newborns and children.





Photo: Olivier Brandenburg

# Community health workers fill gaps.

In the very rural south of Tanzania, the geographical distances are enormous. Mothers of infants are often daunted by the challenge of using the health services. Community health workers trained by SolidarMed bring help closer to the people.

In front of Theresia Pauli Matuli's little hut, her neighbour vigorously stirs in a metal drum. She is boiling freshly harvested maize to brew «pombe», the local beer. There is a celebration planned in Mahenge. The harvest has been brought in and lies dry and protected from mice in roughly timbered storehouses. The community health worker («Waja» in Swahili) of Mahenge village, Tadei Pulapula, greets the beer brewer with a friendly smile and an enquiry about the quality of the beer. He is also visibly excited about the upcoming celebration. As he enters the hut, two children whizz past his legs and

into the open. Their young mother has sent them out so she can speak to the community health worker undisturbed.

Now she sits on a round wooden stool holding her four week old baby. After a friendly greeting, Tadei Pulapula sits down opposite and pages through his information booklet until he reaches a colourful illustration of a breastfeeding woman. Today he will discuss with Theresia why breastmilk protects her baby from infections.



Tanzania:  
 Inhabitants 49'253'000  
 Doctors per 1'000 inhabitants 0,03  
 Life expectancy 63 years



Photo: Olivier Brandenberg

Tadei Pulupula explains the potential risks to her baby's health to Theresia Pauli Matula.

The Matula family after their consultation. Four week old Immanuel sleeps in his mother's arms.

Often, people lack basic knowledge about the causes and symptoms of illnesses, but also about hygiene, healthy nutrition or the risks of pregnancy.

As an experienced mother, Theresia really values the advice of her Waja: «Mr Pulupula explained to me why regular check-ups at the health centre are important. I now also know

which questions I should ask the nurses.» Theresia was not able to eat a balanced diet whilst pregnant, so like many babies in the region, little Immanuel was born underweight. This can cause developmental delays and make him more susceptible to diseases. Now Immanuel has to catch up a lot and needs special care.

Some of what health professionals do in Switzerland is delegated to Wajas in rural Tanzania. This is one response to the enormous lack of health professionals here. Tadei Pulupula is one of over ninety community health workers trained by SolidarMed in the 42 remote villages of the district. He lives in Mahenge and regularly visits the families with small children. With his fellow community health worker, he so accompanies the children in their development. Because they know the children and their families, they can sensitively bring up even intimate matters, which is not always easy. For Tadei Pulupula, the main thing is that «the community elected me, accepts me and values my knowledge about health», shyly summarising his role. He sees himself as a Samaritan who knows the limits of his skills. He refers sick children to the health centre earlier rather than later. Thanks to his closeness to the people, he encourages them to tackle the long distances to the health centre in good time.



Photo: Olivier Brandenberg

## A project with national impact.

SolidarMed: What does a mother need to know to ensure her baby stays healthy?

Gissela Makwisa: In an environment where the diet is very monotonous and hygienic conditions are challenging, breastmilk is good protection for the baby against infection. Wajas demonstrate the importance of breastfeeding, remind mothers about vaccination dates and explain which symptoms of an illness require urgent medical treatment for their child.

How does a Waja maintain their overview?

Wajas regularly visit pregnant women and young mothers at home. Like in Switzerland, every child has a card on which its development is documented. The Wajas are also present during vaccinations and when the children are weighed in the health centre. They are thus able to recognise dangerous deviations and discuss these with the medical staff.

How sustainable are such projects?

It was the health authority itself which asked SolidarMed for help in the communities, because funds and know-how were lacking. By now, local politicians are active participants in the project and repeatedly underline the value of Wajas, which is a big success. The initiative in Ulanga also fits well into the concept of SolidarMed: we support the most remote and most vulnerable populations, which absolutely applies to Ulanga.

What are the next steps?

It's become clear that we started this project at the right time. Many of those Wajas initially financed by SolidarMed are now on the payroll of the government, because the Ministry wants to train community health workers for the whole country. We now support the government at local level in the next steps. This allows us to share our findings at national level and contribute to the expansion of the community health worker approach throughout Tanzania.



Gissela Makwisa,  
community health manager,  
SolidarMed

### Waja – valuable community health workers

Over the past few years, SolidarMed in cooperation with the district authorities has built up a network of Wajas in the district of Ulanga. These community health workers have proven effective in health promotion and in reducing maternal and child mortality. SolidarMed pays for their bicycles and first-aid-kits, gives continuous support and provides further training. In their home villages, Wajas actively look after the wellbeing of the population and prevent diseases. They involve the community and support activities which enable better health. The project is now gradually being expanded into Malinyi district, which is where Lugala Hospital, also supported by SolidarMed, lies.



Photo: Marten Bril

Additional photos from the villages of Mahenge as well as a short film of this interview can be found at:  
[www.solidarmed.ch](http://www.solidarmed.ch)



Photo: SolidarMed

## New Swiss ambassador in Ifakara

Tanzania: «The nursing profession is one of the most important in the world.» This fact was underlined by Florence Tinguely Mattli, the Swiss ambassador to Tanzania, during her project visit to Ifakara. This autumn, she travelled to the Kilombero River to visit the Edgar Maranta Nursing School. Here, she gained an insight into the training of prospective nurses. In the skills lab of the school, the students gave a vivid demonstration of what they had learnt by treating a practice dummy suffering from malaria and an abscess on the left hip. Afterwards, the ambassador officially opened the new dining hall which was financed by the SDC and built by SolidarMed.

of HIV patients in southern Africa do not have affordable access to viral load measurement. This means that the progress of their treatment cannot be accurately tracked and unrecognised treatment failure can occur. Successful treatment is not only important for the patient, but also plays a key role in preventing new infections and thus combating HIV. In a joint project between SolidarMed, the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH) and the Department of Biomedicine of the University of Basel, a device to measure HIV viral load will be installed in Butha-Buthe in November 2015. From 2016, all patients in Butha-Buthe district will have their treatment monitored by viral load measurement at least once a year.



Photo: SolidarMed

## Horse races against HIV

Lesotho: Basotho ponies are known to be «su-refooted, fit and healthy». In the mountains of Lesotho they are the working tools and pride of the farmers. To promote better health amongst young men, the remote health centre of Montmartre organised horse races with SolidarMed's support. The event was a huge success, with proud riders and many spectators enjoying the exciting competitions. Behind carefully placed privacy screens, many allowed themselves to be examined by the nursing staff present. Too often, HIV-positive young men in particular only seek medical help once they've already developed Aids. Early detection and medical treatment for those infected is one of the most effective measures to successfully contain the epidemic, which is particularly critical in Lesotho, where one in four people are HIV positive.



**Tanzania:**  
The Swiss ambassador officially opens a new building at the Edgar Maranta Nursing School

**Lesotho:**  
Viral load monitoring becomes possible in Lesotho

**Lesotho:**  
Horse races against HIV



Photo: SolidarMed

## Measurement of viral load becomes possible in Lesotho

Lesotho: Despite the World Health Organisation recommending it for a long time, a large majority



Photo: Olivier Brandenberg



Photo: Klaus Thieme

## On the road with Ngoni Phiri

27-year-old Ngoni is completing her SolidarMed supported training as a nurse in Zambia. After one year of theory, today was her first day of practical training at Sacred Heart Hospital in Katondwe.

She had to find her way around quickly. Her first patient had been hit and dragged by a truck. He had abrasions all over his body, some of which became badly infected. She helped to treat his wounds. She is successfully learning the ropes and explains what she likes best about her profession: «You are really helping people and if you make an effort, you will receive a «thank you» and a smile. This is what helps me to carry on.»

Thanks to SolidarMed's help, nursing students now have access to new practical training sites. Her year of theoretical training could not completely prepare Ngoni for the difficult reality in rural hospitals. Ensuring that committed young people like Ngoni receive practical training in rural areas ensures that medical care is expanded sustainably. To master the challenges of rural practice, health professionals need to be familiar with them. With appropriate knowledge and skills, they are more likely to stay at on at a rural hospital.

Read more about the SolidarMed projects in Zambia:

[www.solidarmed.ch](http://www.solidarmed.ch) > Countries > Zambia

## Donate your old Apple device

Your old Apple device can be valuable one last time. Thanks to a partnership with revendo.ch, it is now possible to donate your old mobile phone, computer or tablet to SolidarMed.

This clever website calculates the value of the device and this amount can then be donated to SolidarMed. Recycling for more health in Africa!

## Generous outpourings from the Sonnenberg restaurant



Photo: Rest. Sonnenberg

At the restaurant «Sonnenberg» in Kriens, ordering tap water with your meal is not only good for your health. For every carafe of water ordered, the restaurant will donate two Swiss franks

to SolidarMed. This valuable contribution will help ensure that health centres in Moçambique can also offer their patients clean water. Many thanks!

## Give meaningfully!

With a SolidarMed gift certificate, you place a contribution for more health for those who need it most urgently under your Christmas tree. Give the gift of health to families in southern Africa in the name of your loved ones – and double the Christmas joy .

More information at  
[www.solidarmed.ch](http://www.solidarmed.ch)



## Our heartfelt thanks for your commitment!

As the year comes to a close, the SolidarMed team would like to use this opportunity to thank you for your trust. Only with the help of generous individuals and public, church-based and private institutions is more health for people in southern Africa possible. Many thanks!