

# SUCCESS STORY

## Shoe-leather and Persistence: A Door-to-Door Campaign Convinces Reluctant Residents to be Tested and Treated for TB

**Challenge TB finds likely TB patients in their homes and coaxes them to be tested and treated—for their own sake and that of their community**



***“I refused to give a sample.... But they came back later and said they could help me and it would be free... I went on treatment....and now I feel well.”***

***--Alain Kelende, mason and former TB patient***

Alain Kelende had been a mason his whole life, but for the past two years, it became difficult to work because he was exhausted every day and could not stop coughing.

Kelende, 42, lives with his wife and two children in a peri-urban community of Kinshasa. Like many in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), he resisted going to a clinic. Instead he self-medicated for worms, and “kept coughing and growing weaker.”

The DRC ranks among the 22 countries with the highest burden of tuberculosis (TB). Despite the efforts of the national TB program, case notification is only about two-thirds of expected cases, and it dipped another four percent between 2010 and 2011.

Funded by USAID, the Challenge TB project is assisting the Ministry of Public Health’s National TB Program (CPLT) to meet its target of detecting over 70 percent of expected, microscopy confirmed, pulmonary TB cases; treating TB; and coordinating TB/HIV treatment.

MSH

But how do you find and treat TB patients in a place where illness is stigmatized, people believe the ill are cursed, and most avoid clinics in favor of local “healers”?

Challenge TB (CTB) assisted CPLT to take this task head on. In April 2015, the project organized an intensive training for 60 community health workers (40 men, 20 women) in Kisenso and Mont Ngafula health zones, showing them outreach techniques, then sending them door to door to collect sputum samples from people visibly ill, in their own homes. The health workers, with staff from local NGOs and supplies from CTB, conducted a “mini-campaign,” visiting 1,632 households in four days. They collected 2,122 sputum samples, sent them for laboratory analysis—and discovered 12 people with TB.

As for Kelende?

“I refused to give a sample, telling myself I couldn’t have TB,” he said. “But they came back later and said they could help me, and it would be free. Finally I accepted. When the sample came back positive, I immediately went on treatment for two and half months. And now I feel well.”

Challenge TB is a collaboration of Management Sciences for Health (MSH), the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, and KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation. CTB is working with the National TB Program in 21 health zones.