

NCD COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAMS SAVE LIVES

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IN KENYA, the Base of the Pyramid project has greatly improved diabetes care due to price reductions, stable supplies of insulin, training of healthcare professionals, and strengthening of diabetes support centers. Jane Nyambura Chege, a housewife from Kikuyu in Kenya, is just one patient who has benefitted from the Base of the Pyramid project. Jane was diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 29, when she was pregnant with her youngest child. She recalls the diagnosis: “He did not grow very well and I was thirsty and wanted to pee all the time. I went from hospital to hospital. Some said it was malaria, others asthma. At last we went to a private clinic where they measured my blood sugar. I was diagnosed with diabetes.”

“To get insulin was expensive and we did not have the money. Sometimes I went without insulin, because I did not want to disturb my husband and my kids,” she said. Jane put her own needs aside so as not to overstretch her family’s already tight finances. The sacrifice nearly killed her. She ended up weighing only 38 kilo (84 pounds).

For Jane, the Base of the Pyramid project has brought about a notable difference. She can now buy insulin at her local clinic for an amount the family can afford. Today Jane gets vials of insulin at 500 Kenyan Shillings (KES) equivalent to 5 USD. Previously she had to pay up to four times as much for the diabetes medicine. The vials can last anywhere from three weeks to a month. Just to compare, a normal salary for a day’s work is 500 KES, exactly the same amount as a vial of insulin now. Jane communicates regularly with health workers and her health is stable. She has also joined the Diabetes Support Group at St. Josephs Kanyariri Dispensary.



Jane Chege

