

Success Story: Luisa returns to treatment with the support of her community network

A single mother with one daughter, Luisa has lived her entire life in Rieque, Mogovolas. Luisa learned in May 2013 that she was HIV positive when she went the Nametil Health Facility after a period suffering with constant migraines and body aches.

As Luisa shares, “When I went to the Health Facility, they ran many tests. Finally they brought me to a room where I was given the name of my disease. (The nurse) spoke with me and told me I needed to start treatment. I began taking the medicine immediately, but stopped about a month after because I didn’t feel well – I was sure I was getting worse, not better. At this point, I got much worse: I was bed-ridden for close to a month and my daughter took care of me. One afternoon papa Miguel (HTC-C) came to visit. He explained that his job was to visit ill people in the communities like myself, to encourage people to take their medicine, not to miss their appointments, to eat healthy and also to provide HIV tests.”



Matilde, an APE who works in Luisa’s neighborhood, requested that Miguel, the community-based HIV counselor visit Luisa as she had been sick for some time. Luisa explained “I accepted the HIV test, and again my result was positive. I told Papa Miguel that I had started treatment but then stopped. Miguel explained in detail the effects of the treatment and that if I wanted to get better I needed to start taking the medication again. He returned the next day and we went together to the Iulute Health Facility.”

“Before, I was so weak I was hardly able to do anything. My daughter needed to accompany me to the bathroom and bathe her (as APE Matilde taught her to). Now, thanks to God, I can bathe myself. I am able to pound grain, cook, do laundry, even go to the Iulute Health Facility by myself with a walking stick. I want to thank God for giving me a daughter who took care of me and for bringing Miguel and Matilde into my life. If it wasn’t for them, I may have died.”