



### Mercy Okaalet (Uganda)

**Host organization:** mothers2mothers (m2m)

**Fellow position:** Policy Officer

**Fellowship duration:** June 2022 – June 2023

**Degree:** Masters of Public Health in Epidemiology

**Professional experience:** 6+ Years



### Summary

Mercy contributed to the implementation of m2m’s policy advocacy strategy to improve access to universal health coverage (UHC) by positioning m2m’s cadre of paid, professionalised, and skilled community health workers (CHWs) as essential to delivering transformative health outcomes.

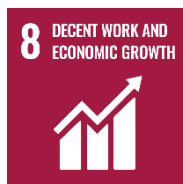
### The problem m2m aims to tackle

- **615M people** across Africa cannot access the health care they need; **2 out of 3 mothers** who die during pregnancy or birth are located in sub-Saharan Africa; **4.2M** more health care workers are needed to meet sub-Saharan Africa’s needs.

### The solution m2m provides...

- m2m employs women living with HIV as CHWs known as Mentor Mothers to deliver integrated primary health care services in 10 African Countries.
- Created ~12,000 jobs, reached more than 15M people, achieved virtual elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV for 8 straight years.

### ... contributing to the SDGs:



### Opportunity for a Fellow

- Provide additional capacity and technical support to in country policy advocacy efforts.
- Build relationships and contribute to engagements with stakeholders, with a particular focus on technical working groups and coalitions working on CHW professionalisation.
- Develop policy related knowledge products, including policy briefs and position papers.

### “My experience as a Fellow...

*...has been truly life changing and affirming. Working with m2m afforded me the opportunity to advocate for CHWs – the pillars of health care delivery in Africa. The m2m model not only delivers primary health care services to underserved communities, but it also empowers women by hiring female CHWs who contribute to the achievement of UHC and the SDGs more broadly. I am grateful to have worked with passionate individuals who strive for a future where, “health for all, brings opportunity for all.”*

- Mercy Okaalet



**Mercy’s achievements...**

- Successfully set up and established ways of working within national level policy contexts including m2m country colleagues and in country stakeholders.
- Worked closely with Malawi’s MOH in the revision and validation of the second National Community Health Framework.
- Coordinated engagements with pro-CHW coalitions, particularly CHIC partners in Malawi.
- Developed key evidence-based policy documents for stakeholders and CHW advocates to identify opportunities for policy change, as well as inform dialogue and increase accountability with policy makers and implementors.
- At the global and regional level, supported m2m’s work in the planning and influencing of policy revision and formulation in AU and UN-related policy processes, including the UN HLM on UHC.
- Developed key stakeholder mapping documents relevant to m2m’s policy advocacy work centered around CHW policies.

**... contributing to mothers2mothers**

- 8 National, regional, and global policy change and influence events
- 4 Evidence-based policy documents developed
- 1 Revision of National Community Health Strategies

**Mercy’s next challenge**

With the current health workforce crisis in LMICs, Mercy will continue to contribute her technical expertise to elevate CHWs in national agendas, as well as advocate for pro-CHWs as the ultimate means to achieving UHC.