

"[Glasses] can increase the demand for any health service": Filsen Abadir, Health Extension Worker, on screening, distribution and demand creation.

Rollo Romig

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Rollo Romig: Tell me your name and what you do for work.

Filsen Abadir: My name is Filsen Abadir. I work as a health extension worker.

Rollo Romig: Was today the first time that you were screening for presbyopia and distributing glasses?

Filsen Abadir: Yes.

Rollo Romig: How do you think it went? What was the experience like?

Filsen Abadir: It was very good. There was no problem. I've gained some more knowledge, but I haven't had any challenges.

Rollo Romig: What sort of response did the people from the community have today?

Filsen Abadir: The community members were very happy about receiving glasses. But those who were given referrals were not happy that they were being referred to somewhere far, because the referral site that has been chosen is a bit further away from us, and they wish there was somewhere closer to our sites.

Rollo Romig: Were they disappointed that they couldn't get glasses today?

Filsen Abadir: We explained to those who weren't happy about not receiving glasses that they are being referred because we don't have the diagnostic equipment here that they need, and that

they would be seen at the other facility. So they were okay with that. What they were not happy with is that it was somewhere far away.

Rollo Romig: What did the people who did receive glasses tell you about what they would use the glasses for?

Filsen Abadir: They told me they would use it to see things that are near, such as picking sand from grains or using needles to sew.

Rollo Romig: Do you think that adding the glasses to the other things you do will help more people come to get other health services?

Filsen Abadir: Yes.

Rollo Romig: And why is that?

Filsen Abadir: When you provide something for them, they assume that they can get additional services from here, and that can increase the demand for any health service.

Rollo Romig: Tell me about the training that you received. What did you think of the training for the screening and distribution?



Filsen Abadir: We got NCD training, and it gave us a lot of knowledge, especially practical knowledge. Because we got to practice, we gained a lot of skills.

Previously we knew only the theoretical part, but after receiving this training, we had a practical session. Now I can screen for these eyeglasses.

Rollo Romig: How did people in the community find out about the event today?



Filsen Abadir: First of all, we inform the community leaders, and they will inform the community. In addition to that, we also use an ambulance to mobilize the community to get screened and receive eyeglasses.

Rollo Romig: Tell me more about how you use the ambulance.

Filsen Abadir: Using the microphone, we go around talking about the screening and distributions so people can hear it.

Rollo Romig: And so you drive slowly through an area and announce it?

Filsen Abadir: Yes.

Rollo Romig: If you could change one thing about the way that this screening and distribution event was organized today, what would you change?

Filsen Abadir: So that we have better crowd control, we should try to spread people over 15 days and not do them all at the same time. That's the only issue.

Rollo Romig: Do you wear near-vision glasses?

Filsen Abadir: Yes. It's at home, but I use a 2.5. I can't read my phone or write without the glasses.

Rollo Romig: Where did you get your glasses?

Filsen Abadir: From the hospital. I bought them for 4000 birr [about \$26 USD] from the hospital five years back.

Rollo Romig: Do the glasses help you do your work?

Filsen Abadir: Yes, they're useful. I have difficulty writing things down without the glasses, but if I'm wearing the glasses, I'm able to see clearly. I used to be in pain, but after using the glasses I'm much better.

Rollo Romig: Thank you.

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Rollo Romig is the manager of Solutions Insights Lab. He is the author of I Am on the Hit List: A Journalist's Murder and the Rise of Autocracy in India, which was named a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in General Nonfiction.

** This interview has been edited and condensed.*