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### **Success Story/ TAMAULIPAS**



I am Daniel... and I defeated TB.

My name is Daniel Luévano Soto and I am 45 years old. I used to work as a carpenter's assistant when I felt that there was something wrong with my body. It all started with a persistent cough that I believed was due to the weather change, it took me by surprise and it made me very weak, but I thought it was only a cold. The days passed by and the cough didn't stop, the worst of it was that I didn't have anyone to take care of me or help me through these moments. The only people in my vicinity were my friends however they always mocked my appearance and thought I had become a drug addict, which was not true. Thanks to God I was able to laugh at the situation and ignore what my friends were saying.

Interviewer: When did you start TB treatment and what was the most challenging aspect?

It was mid June 2008 when I started TB treatment. I have to highlight that, as mentioned before, I didn't have family helping me, worrying about me or even by my side during this period. It was very sad because I started to lose weight and got

tired constantly, I used to weigh 82 kilos and my weight went down to 60 kilos. In a few words that made me sincerely depressed. (in a sad tone)

Interviewer: Before being diagnosed with TB, what made you think that you might have been infected?

One day I was reading a local newspaper and I saw a picture of someone with TB. I could visualize myself like that in the future. That was something that made me think a lot, and due to that I was able to save the most precious thing I have: my own life. Without any other options, I went to the Health Centre, by myself, weak and tired. There they tested me for TB and the results came out positive. The truth is that I had never thought about what it was like to be infected with this disease that affects mostly the lungs, and it turned me upside down. However fortunately everything turned out well and I can say that the disease is only part of my past. (In this paragraph the interviewed shares his experience with serious words, but with satisfaction of having defeated this suffering).

Interviewer: What did they say that you should do after having received positive diagnosis?

I started the treatment in 2008, taking the treatment pills and clearly following their instructions. It was very important that I didn't stop the treatment for any reason whatsoever; stopping treatment would increase the risk of not being completely cured. To my surprise, I started feeling better, I have to stress that it wasn't easy at all, but I had to eat well, make great efforts to keep recovering.

When I was in the second phase of treatment, things were honestly much better, the intensive part was over and with it the fact that I was tired of taking daily the pills to defeat the bacteria, but I stuck to the popular saying: without sacrifices you can't achieve victory. I recognize all the support given by my DOTS supervisor Guadalupe de Jesús García Días and also by the Health Unit's director and all the health staff who were with me during this complicated part of my life, and from which I learned many valuable lessons and which have made me a more conscious human being appreciating and living daily life to its fullest.

Interviewer: Please tell us what kind of activities and events you were involved in and share any anecdotes of some experiences.

When I got cured, I volunteered in the Health Unit number 9, there I used to order files, measure and weigh patients who were in for a doctor's appointment, and so on. I used to do those things with pleasure, I always tried to serve the best way possible. I also took part on the "TBTÓN" – a social mobilization event where people can learn about TB and help through donations - for the years 2009 and 2010. My task was to help packing the groceries collected each year through donations and help with the "boteo" another way of fundraising for the event. The truth is that all these activities made me very happy, especially seeing the goodness of humans.

Currently I work in the Regional Centre against TB in Reynosa, Tamaulipas. I am very committed to my job, every action or task given to me I try to do it 100%. I want to be a role model of tenacity and perseverance, I want to inspire TB patients, showing them they can move forward, testifying the results of this programme in which I am lucky to be part of during this new phase of my life.

There is nothing else to say but that the programme works nobly, it already cured a lot of people that unfortunately got infected with lung diseases, and like many people say, it gives security to know that TB has a cure, always and when the patient commits to follow strictly the 6 months treatments, with no interruptions. (He added).

Notes from Interviewer:

It is unique to be able to appreciate the satisfaction this man has doing his work, he keeps an excellent relationship with each of his colleagues, and every time he has the chance, he shares his experiences of when he was a patient. Ironically this disease made him who he is now and has placed him here, and it is clear that everything happens for a reason, and Daniel transformed this reason into an achievement.

Don Daniel, as we all call him, is a clear example of value and constant fight, he got over difficult times and learned how to face adversities, even a health problem could have been transformed in something good. He recognizes that the National TB Programme provides important support to people that like him, unprotected and with little hope. Full of health, he shares his life experience with those who are lucky to hear it.

SUMMARY:

Daniel Luévano is 45 years old, he got infected by TB less than 3 years ago, and despite having no family during these so complicated months, he never gave up. Now he is thankful to the health staff, doctors, nurses and supervisor, who assisted him during his treatment. Thanks to all his efforts, today he is able to share what he has been through, both the tough moments and the good ones - being able to contribute to the programme having obtained a job at a TB centre where he himself was one of the hundreds of people diagnosed for TB.

Interviewer and photographer: Reynaldo A. Urquiza Trejo  
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