simprints
every person counts

My fingerprints saved my life

Akililu, 46, is a farmer and father of three. He resides in Lemo woreda in the SNNPR region of Ethiopia. Akililu recalls how one summer's day, he travelled to a nearby town to sell a small calf to cover the expenses of his eldest son's tuition fees.

On his way home from the town, he was suddenly hit by a small truck travelling at high speed while he was crossing the road. Akililu was thrown to the dusty road, unconscious. The truck continued, and no one was around to help him.

Sometime later, a minibus travelling to the next town passed Akililu on the ground and stopped to help. The minibus took Akililu to a local health post that had been selected to pilot Simprints technology. Health Extension Workers (HEWs) tried to call an ambulance for Akililu but failed to get a response due to the weak mobile reception. Akililu was still unconscious and unable to identify himself. After cleaning and dressing his wounds, the health extension workers checked his pockets for any sign of ID but could not find any. One of the HEWs suggested scanning his fingerprint in case his biometrics were registered on the digital system supported by Simprints. To their surprise, Akililu's fingerprints matched a record in the system, and the HEWs found his full name, village and a telephone number for his wife. Akililu's wife took him to the hospital for urgent care.

The following day, Akililu regained consciousness, and after three days, he was able to leave the hospital and return home. He was thankful for the minibus passengers and the HEWs. He was so impressed at how the fingerprints he had given months before had saved his life. Akililu said:

"If I hadn't been identified by my fingerprints and if the HEW had not been able to call my family, that day would have been the end of my life, and I would not be here today to tell my story. These fingers have saved my life."

The subject's name and some identifying details have been changed to protect their privacy. Photos are not of the subject.

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