

Communities Ensure Improved Healthcare

When Kainat was treated carelessly at a poorly equipped health facility, her community was there to raise questions on her behalf



18-year old Kainat, holding her baby as she relates her story

March 2014: When Kainat's labor pains began one evening she was taken to the nearest health facility, where she gave birth five hours later. However, all was not well. Soon after her delivery, Kainat's doctor was nowhere to be found and Kainat began bleeding profusely. Her family located the doctor, who informed them that Kainat needed stitches which were not available at the health facility. A visibly unwell Kainat was shifted to the district headquarters hospital where she was given emergency treatment that saved her life, but the medical staff there confirmed that it had been a close call. A few more minutes would have proved fatal for both Kainat and her child.

The next day, the incident was discussed in a meeting of the union council's health committee. The health committee comprises of men and women from the community, who take note of problems faced by people in accessing healthcare, and liaise with the health department and healthcare providers to resolve them. It was decided that the committee's president and board members would visit the health facility where Kainat had given birth and speak with the doctor personally. Upon their visit they were informed that the facility lacked the equipment and supplies to deal with any kind of emergency, and that although a request for equipment had been filed, it had not arrived. The health committee president then approached the District Monitoring Officer of the People's Primary Healthcare Initiative, who runs the health facility, to discuss the issue and demand a solution. On the president's insistence, the paperwork was completed immediately and the equipment sent to the health facility.

Union council health committees have been set up in 23 union councils in Sindh to bring issues of quality and access to healthcare to the attention of the health department and healthcare

providers, and lobby with them for improvement. Through the union council health committees, people have a way to report the gaps in critical health services and prevent failures in the service delivery system such as those faced by Kainat.



The union council health committee met with the health facility supervisor and the District Monitoring Officer, PPHI, to discuss Kainat's near-death incident