

Success Story: Community Mobilization Leads to Skilled Birth Attendance

By Laila Hussain

“The idea of going to a hospital always made me nervous. I was afraid I wouldn’t be treated well there,” says Amina. Although Amina has seven children, she had never given birth in a hospital, without a traditional birth attendant, or *dai*.

Amina is 40 years old, and has been married 20 years. She lives in Abdullah Khushk, a small village in the district of Dadu, Sindh, which has no local schools or health facilities nearby. Since it is not covered by the government-run Lady Health Worker program, there is a general lack of information about healthcare in the village, particularly for women, who are often not permitted to leave home unaccompanied.

Although Amina has had three miscarriages, she had no knowledge of antenatal care practices or birth preparedness until she met Shahida, the Community Resource Person for the village. As a CRP, Shahida is responsible for educating the women of Abdullah Khushk on issues of mother and child health. “She referred me to the hospital for antenatal checkups every month, encouraged me to save money, and helped me get transport from the Village Health Committee so I could go to the hospital,” said Amina.

During Amina’s antenatal checkups, the doctor warned her of the health risks involved in giving birth at home, particularly because of her age. The local *dai* agreed, and encouraged her to go to the hospital. When the time came for the baby to be born, the *dai* took Amina to the civil hospital in Khudabad where contrary to her fears, she received swift treatment, free of cost.

“This was my first delivery at a hospital because the *dai* in our area refused to conduct it”, says Amina. She was deeply grateful to the CRP and the *dai* for helping her realize how important it is to take proper care of her own health as well as her children’s. Amina and her newborn son are now happy and healthy.

