

“Ching chi” An Emergency Ambulance

Awaz Foundation Pakistan



In District Muzaffargarh maternal health complications are a leading cause of morbidity among women. AwazCDS-Pakistan initiated Supporting Access to Family Planning and Post Abortion Care (SAFPAC) project (locally name, WARHI, Women and Reproductive Health Initiative) in district Muzaffargarh in 2013 with the technical support of Care International in Pakistan (CIP)

SAF-PAC aims to address PAC and increase family planning uptake by focusing on the central role that communities can play in improving access to services and taking action for improved health.

Efforts began to create an environment in which the community would work together to prevent unintended or mistimed pregnancies and ensure access to quality care for women with post abortion complications.

AwazCDS-Pakistan & CIP engaged communities in its project and utilized Village Health Committees (VHC) for community empowerment. One of the VHC focusing in village Abdul Rahim Wala in Moza Kajwain of catchment area of BHU Umer Pur Janobi has stepped ahead for the welfare of poor mothers of their area.

Population of this BHU is around 50,000. SAF-PAC field team fostered engagement through local participation, raising awareness about PAC and supporting community members to seek care. By making this effort, community realized to make best use of their available resources which helped in two critical ways; i) It reduced the stigmas and misconceptions linked with FP & PAC services. ii) Overall improvement in well-being and responsiveness to ongoing health issues of women community especially mothers.

We initiated the efforts in May, 2014. Village Health Committee (VHC) of BHU Umar Pur Janobi (comprising of 15 members including 07 females) started monthly Social Analysis and Action (SAA) exercise in its target area. In this exercise VHC members used to identify the factors which prevent/influence the ladies to get reproductive health care and discuss the possible way forwards which can be opted by them to resolve the issues. AwazCDS-Pakistan/CIP also developed the linkages of VHC members with the Basic Health Unit staff of Umer Pur Janobi by conducting meetings at the health facility, where Health facility staff and VHC members jointly struggled for good working relationship to deliver best health practices among marginalized community. Efforts of VHC members in monthly Social Action Analysis exercise not only strengthened the health system but also succeeded in utilization of social power and resources.

In one of such exercise, VHC members realized the need of ambulance to cater emergency of pregnant women in odd hours. All VHC members were active but not so rich to fully contribute. However, they all decided to hire a “Ching chi” (Rickshaw) which could be used as an emergency ambulance to transport such women/mothers to the nearest health facility. They arranged a “Ching chi” (Number MHK 8974) to transport

such emergencies free of cost. The emergency ambulance (Ching Chi) is now available round the clock to serve the community when and where required. VHC members generate the funds for running expenses of their ambulance through mutual contribution.

So far VHC members have been successful in their noble cause by supporting more than 103 female patients to get the emergency services from nearest health facilities. Among them, 80% of the cases were facing various complications during pregnancy. Rest of the cases was having issues related with mother's health.

In addition, VHC members used to identify such families who need support/information about reproductive health care refer them to the public health facilities and follow up their progress.

AwazCDS-Pakistan in collaboration with CIP has created a best example of community engagement through self-help basis.