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UZBEKISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Breastfeeding Gains Way in a Village

USAID and its grantee help a village keep the children healthy



Kobilov resident Feruza Rakhimova is happy that breastfeeding keeps her newborn healthy. Photo: Project HOPE

“Even with two small children, I can still take care of the household chores, because breastfed baby sleeps well and stays healthy. I will breastfeed all my children.”

Feruza Rakhimova, a resident of Kobilov Village in Denau District

In the near past, it was difficult for medical workers of Kobilov Village, Denau District to advise mothers with small children how to keep their children healthy. Medical staff did not have sufficient knowledge nor skills on proper feeding or prevention of the most common illnesses that caused high morbidity among children under 2 years old in the area. The situation changed when the village medical unit began cooperating with USAID and its grantee Project HOPE.

USAID and Project HOPE trained the medical staff at the village how to consult families on breastfeeding and the most common childhood illnesses. Inspired by the training, head of the Kobilov medical unit, Karomat Jumaeva, decided to launch a comprehensive campaign and spread the information throughout the village. “Nurses conducted events, where women shared their successful experience in breastfeeding and new mothers received informational brochures” says Kobilov resident Feruza Rakhimova, a mother of two children under the age of three.

The informational campaign was first started when Rakhimova was pregnant with her first child Asmo. Rakhimova was trained on the benefits of breastfeeding during her pregnancy, and when she returned home with the newborn, staff of the medical unit visited her at home and helped her to adjust feeding so that the baby grows healthy. When her daughter Asmo was 2.5 years old, Rakhimova had her second child, boy Fuzaylo. She continues using the knowledge on breastfeeding with her son as well. “Bringing up my first child was not difficult for me, and now I have no problems with Fuzaylo either,” says Rakhimova. “Even with two small children, I can still take care of the household chores, because breastfed baby sleeps well and stays healthy. I will breastfeed all my children,” she says.

As a result of its continuous efforts to educate and consult new mothers on healthy feeding for their children, 65% of children under 6 months of age were exclusively receiving breastfeeding. In recognition of its work, the medical unit was awarded the Baby-Friendly Hospital certification from the World Health Organization and UNICEF. But more importantly, “morbidity among children under the age of 1 year dropped by half in our district,” said head of the medical unit Jumaeva.