

Advocacy case studies

MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH IN PAKISTAN

COUNTRY:	Pakistan
THEMES:	Children and education; health
ADVOCACY APPROACHES:	Government officials: lobbying; government officials: meeting with

In the district of Kohistan in Pakistan, women and children in disadvantaged local communities are at increased risk of disease and even death from poor health for a combination of reasons. These include poverty, illiteracy, harmful traditional practices, a lack of basic health knowledge, and limited access to health-related information.

Some years ago, Tearfund partner Pak Mission Society (PMS) successfully lobbied for a mother and child health centre to be set up in Pattan, the capital of Kohistan district, to address these concerns. The centre treats the major causes of poor health in the area, such as respiratory infections, diarrhoea, measles, malnutrition and neonatal issues.

It soon became clear to PMS that in order to provide a more effective service to mothers and children, the centre needed to offer a vaccination facility in addition to its other services. They took this issue to the district health department on behalf of the community, asking it to meet this need.

PMS were successful in their lobbying and a Memorandum of Understanding was drawn up with the district health department, stipulating that the mother and child health centre would also offer a vaccination clinic for the Pattan area. It was agreed that the department would be responsible for the vaccines and finding a suitable government-trained and registered vaccinator, and that PMS would provide funds for the vaccinator's salary. The vaccinator reports both to the district health department and the centre's management, giving the local community ownership of the initiative.

During a monitoring visit, the Director General for the province's immunisation programme, Mr Jan Baz Afridi, was impressed by the services provided by the mother and child centre, and the scale of their work. The centre provides vaccinations and meets other healthcare needs for thousands of patients every year.