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AZERBAIJAN

SUCCESS STORY

Keeping Children Healthy

Children gain access to vaccines and basic health services



Photo: Mercy Corps/Thatcher Cook

Children peer into the local health clinic, where they now receive vaccines regularly.

Peer educators have helped mothers become active, articulate advocates for their families' health rights, including immunization for their children.

Telling Our Story
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When Yeni Karki, a small village in the autonomous republic of Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan was established by the government as a home for families displaced by conflict, the village lacked consistent health services. The only health worker in the area

had to travel from a neighboring village. Among the health issues that remained unaddressed was immunization — children did not regularly receive the vaccines that would protect them from deadly illnesses.

USAID sponsored a primary healthcare project designed to disseminate accurate health information locally. The program trained peer educators in basic health needs and helped establish a Village Health Council and a Women's Health Group. The peer health educators, health council members, and the USAID-sponsored team then

worked to change the health services landscape in the village.

The Village Health Committee held meetings to understand the full extent of the town's health needs. One mother told them that her 18-month-old son had been immunized just once — but she had just learned that children should be immunized six times during their first year. Peer educators led routine health education activities, helping the displaced population become active, articulate advocates for their families' health rights.

Working together, the USAID-sponsored project team, the newly trained peer educators, and mothers of young children convinced the Ministry of Health that the village's children needed access to vaccinations regularly.

Thanks to the joint effort, immunization services were reinstated at the local health clinic.