



## SUCCESS STORY

# Local Health Committee Promotes Vaccination in Babil

*The USAID Primary Health Care Project in Iraq (PHCPI) partners with the Iraqi Ministry of Health (MOH) to strengthen the delivery of primary health care services throughout the country. The project focuses on improving maternal and child health services and supporting the Government of Iraq to improve the standards and quality of 36 “model clinics” to serve as a prototype for future replication and investment in primary health care throughout Iraq.*

**H**ealth behaviors are difficult to change, as they are often rooted in traditional practices or may be caused by misinformation. Lack of confidence in the health system can deter individuals from seeking health care or adopting new and important information. In Iraq, the USAID Primary Health Care Project (PHCPI) is assisting the MOH to increase use of and demand for primary health care services by expanding community partnerships throughout the country.

A key component is the establishment of local health committees (LHCs), designed to encourage the link between community needs and primary health care service delivery by supporting dissemination of basic health information, raising awareness of key health initiatives such as immunizations and school health campaigns,



Ahmed Saied tells his story to the USAID/PHCPI Babil Provincial Coordinator, the manager of the clinic, and a member of the LHC. *Photo: USAID/PHCP*

advocating for critical community interventions and providing critical information to the public.

Ahmed Saied is a father of two living in Babil in central Iraq. He admits that he had previously refused to take his children, Maryam (2) and Ali (1), to the clinic to receive vaccinations or participate in community health campaigns. He reported that his mother had always told him that vaccinations make children sick, and he believed her. However, his attitude changed when he encountered a sheik of his tribe who was also an active member of his community's LHC.

Ahmed said, “He gave me brochures and booklets to read, and explained to me how wrong we were not

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to vaccinate. Now I'm regularly taking my children for vaccination and will never miss a scheduled one again. They get a little bit feverish afterward, but I know now that it is temporary."

Ahmed is now an active supporter of vaccination, eager to tell his story to others. Thanks to the community's LHC, Ahmed's children and those like them will be healthier and happier.

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