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ONE WOMAN'S QUEST FOR A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY



Mona works at the distribution point of life-saving healthy nutrition for Yemen Family Care Association, seeking to raise awareness and educate the local communities around her. She conducted monthly malnutrition screenings for more than a hundred child in the area, followed by some nutrition education, supplementary feeding at the distribution point in Al Mubadar village during distribution cycles, and regular visits to internally displaced people (IDP) camps that are a 90-minute walk from her area.

Despite the huge positive impact of her work, Mona still faces difficulties due to the lack of health education among the local population, especially women who give birth at home. For example, a traditional postpartum practice for generations is the practice of putting drops of ghee into the noses of newborn babies and anointing them with it, which Mona initially faced resistance to changing when she set out to explain the potentially harmful effects of the ritual.

Fortunately, Mona's efforts to educate the local community about the importance of following a balanced diet and exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months have paid off. She also spreads awareness of the importance of complementary feeding, child health, and routine immunization. Pregnant women who suffer from moderate acute malnutrition are given folic acid tablets and deworming tablets to maximize the impact on the health of the mother and child.



Through successive monthly visits to the camps of the displaced people, Mona provided the beneficiaries with awareness and health education. She saw the improvement in their nutrition practice. For example, when Mona took Mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) measurement for a woman in her seventh month of pregnancy. It was approximately 26 cm, indicating that Mona's efforts didn't go to waste. One of the beneficiaries said, **"the community health volunteer's presence and her monthly visit contributed to our awareness and taking measurements for children and women, making a great change in our lives, especially during the outbreak of the cholera epidemic."**

During her work, Mona faced various challenges ranging from a lack of awareness to unhealthy practices of the community in Mawiah district. For instance, families refused vaccination when the volunteers reached out to them, with one mother commenting, **"we think the vaccination is bad."** However, with several awareness sessions and immense efforts that Mona provided for the local society, the targeted people tend to change their behavior towards healthy practices. Another woman said, **"the sessions we received on the importance of hygiene, right nutrition practices, and infant feeding were so useful."** Mona's dedication and hard work are truly making a difference in the lives of the people in her community.