



THE WHITE RIBBON ALLIANCE

HEALTHY MOTHERS
HEALTHY WORLD

KEEPING SOMALI MOMS HEALTHY IN SWEDEN

During 2015, White Ribbon Alliance Sweden have been supporting immigrant, Somali women who are pregnant or new moms, better understand and navigate the health care system in Sweden.

Alliance Coordinator Anna Edberg shared, “the Somali community in Stockholm alone, now reaches 10,000 people. As a maternal health organization, we want to ensure that pregnant women and their families know what services they can access. At the same time we want health workers to understand what kind of challenges women in this growing community face and how to better address them.” Via this initiative, over 500 Somali families have received information about the maternal health care and services that are available to them before, during, and after childbirth.

At the beginning of the project, health workers, Somali community leaders, and youth representatives were involved in creating an implementation plan. Together, a series of monthly informational and interactive workshops in three cities across Sweden (Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmo) were developed.

The majority of women and their husbands or partners who have participated in the workshops, acknowledge that they had little previous understanding of the services available and how to access care. One barrier has been language; 75% of participants have immigrated to Sweden within the last two years and do not speak Swedish well enough to comprehend current materials that are widely available. To combat this problem White Ribbon Alliance brochures have been translated into Arabic and distributed throughout the Somali community and information films (created by Medical Aid Films) have been shown. An additional benefit of the workshops has been to trigger discussions about family planning and the general need to keep the family healthy.

A new mom shared, “I came to Sweden one year ago to live with my husband’s family. I don’t speak any Swedish, and I don’t know where to go to receive maternal services. Meeting with other women who are in my situation and hearing a health worker explain everything was very helpful.”

White Ribbon Alliance members have worked with the leaders of the Somali community to plan for the monthly, maternal health workshops to continue until April 2016. New funding is being sought to secure the long term future of the project.

