

Oral History Kosovo

Interviewer: Tell me, how many children do you have?

Narrator: Four.

Interviewer: When did you have your first child?

Narrator: My first child, actually my oldest son turned 46 on April 1st.

Interviewer: You gave birth when you were 17-18 years old?

Narrator: Yes, like that. Believe me, I gave birth to my first child at home.

Interviewer: Tell me a little about it, how?

Narrator: I gave birth at home, I was pregnant, I went to the doctors, did check-ups, he said, "You have time." When I went to the hospital, the doctor said, "Okay," he said, "You can stay here for three or four days since you're from the village," he said, you know, "so you don't go back and forth, stay for a week so we can see if you're ready to give birth." A week went by, "Well," he said, "You're not ready." They discharged me, I went home. After a week, God, I gave birth to my first child. At home.

Interviewer: How?

Narrator: I started having contractions. It was around noon, we were eating lunch. My sister's husband was there, he only had that sister, she had died. And they said, they called her Sister because they were two brothers and only had one sister. She said, "Sister [sister-in-law]," she said, "I want to go home because I've stayed for two weeks," she said, "for a break," she said, "you didn't give birth," she said, "I would want to be here," you know, "and help you." God, as we were talking, eating lunch, I started getting contractions, at that moment. I got up because my father-in-law was there, I was embarrassed, a man. I went outside, my mother-in-law said, "What happened?" I said, "I'm sick." I didn't know what the pain was like with my first child, I just noticed my back hurt. They finished lunch and came out. I was walking around the yard, when the contractions would start, I would hold on to a tree and work again. I gave birth to my child at a quarter to five. We went inside...

Interviewer: What, what say it again?

Narrator: A quarter to five in the evening, I gave birth to my son. I was in pain for around two hours in the afternoon. We went inside, my mother-in-law said, I had a lot of pain here, she was holding my knees, she said, "Maybe," you know, "your pain will go away." The pain increased, as the time to give birth came, I was praying to God, praying to God. My sister-in-law was in the front, she helped me like a doctor, she said, "Push, breathe in, breathe in." And I gave birth to a boy, my first child at home.

My sister-in-law cut the baby's cord. She first took care of the baby, then slowly I didn't know what was happening next, she said, "Sister, you have one more difficulty." "What?" She said, "You have to push out the amniotic sac." And she said, "Blow," you know the water pots made out of clay. "Blow," she said, "this hard and the amniotic sac will come out." I blew three times and I was relieved. It was problematic because, "If it gets swollen," she said, "you can die." And God relieved me, she cleaned me. (laughs) I laid down in the bed with my son, and I never had any problems.