

Oral History Kosovo

INTERVIEW EXTRACT

[The in-depth oral history interview with the narrator was conducted on May 22, 2021 in Pristina. Due to the narrator's request for anonymity, we have concealed the identity.]

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 recently, on April 1st.

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

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

Interviewer: Tell me a little about it, how?

Narrator: I gave birth at home, I was pregnant, so 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 and maybe you'll go into labor 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, "it's not time yet." They discharged me, I went home. After a week, God, I gave birth to my first son, my child. At home.

Interviewer: How?

Narrator: I started feeling pain. It was around noon, we were eating lunch. My husband's sister was there, they only had that sister, she has died now. 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 I'd help you." God, as we were talking, eating lunch, I started feeling pain, at that moment. I got up, I was embarrassed because my father-in-law, a man, was there. I went outside, and my mother-in-law said, "What is going on?" I said, "I'm sick." I didn't know what the pain was like with my first child, I just could tell my back hurt. They finished lunch quickly and came out. I was walking around, walking around the yard, when the pain would start, I would hold on to a tree and rest, again and again. I gave birth to my child at a quarter to five. We went inside...

Interviewer: What, can you repeat that?

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 and my mother-in-law said, I had a lot of pain here, she was holding my knees saying, "Maybe your pain," you know, "will slightly go away." As the pain got worse, the time to give birth was approaching, I was praying to God, praying to God. My sister-in-law was in front of me, she helped me like a doctor, she'd say, "Push, take a deep breath, take a deep breath." And I gave birth to a boy, the first child of the house.

My sister-in-law cut the baby's cord herself. 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." "Yes, what is it?" She said, "You have to push out the amniotic sac of the child." And she said, "Blow," you know the water pots made out of clay that we had back then. "Blow," she said, "this hard and the amniotic sac will come out." I blew three times and I was relieved. That was also a problem because, "If it gets swollen," she said, "you could die." And God relieved me, he cleared me. (laughs) I laid down in bed with my son, and since then I have never had any problems.