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SUKH INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER



sukh.theamanfoundation.org

SPECIAL EDITION FOR CONFERENCE OF SOCIETY OF OBSTETRICIANS & GYNECOLOGISTS OF PAKISTAN (SOGP)

MESSAGE BY THE HEAD OF SUKH INITIATIVE

Dr. Haris Ahmed



I congratulate Society of Obstetricians & Gynecologists of Pakistan (SOGP) for successfully organizing its 17th Biennial International Scientific Conference. Such meaningful interactions are valuable to strengthen reproductive health care systems in Pakistan. Sukh Initiative supports FP2020 to improve access to quality family planning services by increasing demand generation, strengthening provision of supplies, providing high quality of services in the target communities along with ensuring sustainability. It is high time we all take responsibility to improve family planning services in Pakistan and each one of us need to play an active role in this regard. Sukh Initiative has demonstrated a successful model encompassing key elements of family planning. Our best practices have been adopted at the government level. We will continue to add value to this sector.

IMPACT MADE BY SUKH INITIATIVE (SERVICES DATA 2015-2017)

1.2 Million Live Births averted

As of 2018, Sukh Initiative has been successful to achieve **9 percent mCPR** in the target communities

1,972 Abortions averted

1,285 Maternal deaths averted

1.6 Million Unintended pregnancies averted

ABOUT SUKH

Vision

Sukh Initiative empowers families to access contraception by increasing knowledge, improving quality of services and expanding the basket of choices; contributing to the goals of FP2020.

The Sukh Initiative is a multi-donor funded project, with goal of increasing the use of modern contraceptives amongst one million underserved peri-urban population of Karachi city of Sindh, Pakistan. This project is a joint partnership between three private Foundations; the Aman Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

Goal

To increase prevalence of modern contraceptives by 15 percentage points, from the baseline, in selected one million, underserved peri-urban population of Karachi, Sindh.

Implemented under Aman Health Care Services, Sukh Initiative is committed to provide FP related information, counselling, supplies, referrals and quality services to women of reproductive age residing in selected communities. The project is being implemented by a consortium of six national and international organizations. This includes Jhpiego, dkt, Aman Community Health Program, Aman Telehealth, Aahung Additionally, project also focuses on youth, to sensitize on reproductive health and to be a responsible adult.

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SUCCESS STORIES

SUKH INITIATIVE — EXEMPLIFYING A SYSTEM APPROACH TO OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO USE FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES



Karachi, Sindh, September 13, 2017 – Ayub, 30, lives in a two-room squatter settlement with his wife Hameeda, four children and parents in the suburbs of Karachi. Though he himself had no schooling, his wife Hameeda has elementary education. Uneducated and unskilled, he works on daily wages as a laborer and struggles to make the ends meet. Back-to-back pregnancies led Hameeda to be severely anemic unable to take care of herself or her children. This had put additional burden on his meager income. “I was worried of her,” Ayub said, “but I had no one to turn to and leave it to God’s will.”

A Community Health Worker (CHW), under the Sukh Initiative, on routine visit advised Hameeda for using a long-term family planning method. She asked Hameeda to discuss the use of implant with her husband. For Ayub, however, family planning has always been an uncomfortable subject. When Hameeda brought the subject up, he simply refused to have any discussion. “I was uncomfortable” Ayub said, “I did not want to discuss this [family planning] with my wife so how could I had allowed an outsider [CHW] to discuss such a personal thing.” Upon her next visit after learning from Hameeda that Ayub is unwilling, CHW tried but could not have discussion with Ayub. Over the next few months, the CHW continued visiting Ayub’s family providing general checkups and referrals to his wife and children. This helped in improving health of Hameeda and her children and reducing financial burden on Ayub. More importantly, it also helped gaining the trust of Ayub.

Realizing that Ayub might be uncomfortable discussing family planning face-to-face, the CHW asked him to

register with the TeleHealth helpline established under the Sukh Initiative. Upon his agreement, the CHW registered Ayub to the service. “I was reluctant the first time I received the call,” Ayub recalled his experience of receiving an outbound call from an Operator from TeleHealth, “but the first time he only mentioned the purpose why he was calling and the services and information he could offer.” In follow-up contacts, Ayub felt more comfortable and started sharing information. It was the third follow-up contact by the TeleHealth operator to which Ayub agreed for the need to use a family planning method. “I discussed this with Hameeda, I was so impressed,” Ayub narrated his experience of TeleHealth, “and we decided that it is best we start using a family planning method.” On the next visit, the CHW accompanied Hameeda to a nearby Aman Clinic for administering the procedure. “We are happy now,” Ayub looked at this wife smilingly, “and her [Hameeda] health has improved and I feel nice that we made the decision together.”

Increasing male involvement and improving interspousal communication are considered among key factors for uptake of family planning services and overcoming high unmet need in Pakistan. In Sukh Initiative, 200 CHWs have been inducted to serve uncover population of 800,000 people of peri-urban areas of Karachi. This is in addition to the support and facilitation the Initiative is providing to 800 Lady Health Workers. In addition to family planning information, this network is providing counseling services to couples to address barriers to the use of family planning services. Their door-to-door services are augmented with a 24/7 helpline, which is catering to both inbound calls and also making outbound calls to prospective users registered by CHWs. CHWs are also connected to a network of health clinics and facilities for referral services. Ayub’s story exemplifies how the Sukh Initiative is taking a system approach consisting of behavior change, demand generation and service provision to overcome individual barriers to family planning services.



SUKH INITIATIVE — MOBILIZING COMMUNITIES TO LEAD TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

Karachi, Sindh, September 13, 2017 – Fehmida Anwar Khan, 28, is a mother of four who lives in an impoverished suburb of Karachi. She looks older than her age but seems content with life. Her home, also shared by her in-laws, seems to be better kept than other houses in the neighborhood. The story of her formative years is no different to other women of her community. Despite being a bright student she could not continue her education beyond secondary. Married at the age of 18, she has already mothered four. It is during the later years of her married life that she was able to transform herself and became an inspiration and role model for other women of her community. “I always wanted to do something, I knew there is a business woman in me,” she said smilingly. She has helped her husband setup a small family business allowing her to take care of other members of her family. “I did not want to end up as other women in my community, marrying early and bearing children but I was too young to withstand the pressure,” she said passionately. Her husband and mother-in-law were not supportive of family planning in the beginning. “Frankly, they did not see any need for it,” explaining their disapproval, “and I did not have information or access to family planning.” Her family became more supportive of her needs and respectful of her decisions when she actively started contributing towards running the family business and it soon bore fruits. “Now my husband and I practice family planning but I wish I could have had access to services of community health workers (CHW) earlier in my marital life,” she did not sound disappointing but thoughtful. “I want other women of my community to avail what I could not,” she looked pleased and continued, “I’m helping them introduced to Sukh Initiative and how they can avail services through this program.”

Fehmida is now a core member of a Community Representative Group (CRG), formed under the Sukh Initiative, which meets every month and introduces the program and health services, especially those that relates to family planning, to other members of her community. She was among the most forthcoming



volunteers to join the Sukh Initiative when introduced to it for the first time. Initially, she mobilized community members to meetings of CRG and accompanied women of her community to health facilities. Later, she actively started managing health camps together with the CHW of her area. “I have so far convinced and helped six women of my community to start using long-term family planning methods,” she said proudly of her contribution to the program, “health camps have helped as women feel empowered when they are together and are more receptive to family planning information and how to access services.” It is not just her entrepreneurial spirit and eagerness to extend a helping hand, a few minutes into conversation could tell that her ability to relate to and gain trust of other women of her community has also helped. “Of course they have apprehensions, they ask me about side-effects,” when asked of what sort of challenges she has to face, “but I respond to them with a question that whether the side-effects which are minor and can be managed are of more worry to them or their health, wellbeing and the burden of lifetime concern them more.”



In recognition of her contributions, Aman Foundation honored Fehmida with an award and also organized a health camp in her name. Nearly 300 women have benefited because of Fehmida. It is because of such transformative and community led contributions that Sukh Initiative is leading thousands of families to healthier and brighter future.

PROMOTING LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Promoting life skills education among youth holds the value of a lynchpin in Sukh Initiative's strategy. Aahung, partner to Sukh Initiative for life skills education is making continuous efforts in this direction with focused approach. During October 2017, Aahung carried out three school-wide program activities in the catchment areas of Sukh Initiative. These youth centric activities were held for students, parents, teachers and staff of Nasra Secondary School Korangi (morning and afternoon shifts) and Government Boys High School, Landhi.

In the morning session activities at Nasra School, various sensitive topics, such as consequences of early marriage, peer pressure and sexual harassment, were highlighted through skits by students of grade 9. In the afternoon session, skits were presented on pubertal changes, gender roles and discrimination, and consequences of eating harmful substances, such as pan and gutka (betel nut and concoction of tobacco and betel nut). In both of the sessions, the skits ended with emotional and



inspirational speeches on women's rights. In the Government Boys High School Landhi, a skit was performed by students on self-protection from harmful behaviors. This session at the Boys High School was also attended by 8 officials of different government departments. These included, Mr. Shahid Kamal, the Principal Government Polytechnic Institute (Boys) Landhi, who lauded the efforts to promote life skills among youth. It was noted that these extra curricular activities help increase confidence of students so that they are able to conveniently share their common issues and build their capacity to perform necessary role. Also, the skits increased overall knowledge and awareness of students on sexual and reproductive health and rights.



SENSITIZING PARENTS - AN IMPERATIVE

Sensitizing parents on youth issues is the need of the hour. Aahung under Sukh Initiative organized sensitization sessions for parents at Baldia Government Girls Secondary School and N.A. Abbasi Government Boys Secondary School, both located in Landhi. The first session was held on August 21, 2017 and 63 parents were sensitized about the importance of life skills development. The second session was organized on October 19, 2017 with 60 parents taking part in it. Both the meetings began with a welcome address by Aahung's field coordinator.

Parents were briefed on the importance of Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) in offering the best possible learning environment for the students, such as personal grooming, safe behaviors and good touch/bad touch,

etc. They were sensitized about the importance of education, consequences of early marriage in a girl's life, negative effects of pan, gutka and chaalia (betel nut leaves, concoction of tobacco and betel nut), as well as impact of peer pressure.



Sukh Initiative is a multi-donor funded family planning and reproductive health project of Aman Health Care Services, implemented through a consortium of local and international organizations in collaboration with provincial government departments. The project aims to increase modern contraceptive prevalence rate by 15 percentage points in the one million underserved peri-urban population of Karachi city, Sindh, Pakistan

Provincial Government Partners



Project Partners

