“Community in fact, is at the forefront to confront disasters”, Mashooq Ali, President UDMC Bustaan, commented. He revealed that he witnessed various disasters in the past years including the recent floods of 2011 and cyclones. “People”, he added, “are therefore required to be enabled and capacitated so that they proactively plan to mitigate the risks in an organized manner.”

RSPN in collaboration with USAID had initiated Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) project named Tahafuz in four districts namely Thatta, Badin, Umerkot and Tharparkar. The project aimed at enhancing capacity of the people with an objective to reduce the probability of failure and ensure synergetic efforts for protection and rehabilitation during and after the disaster. Union Council Bustaan of District Umerkot was one of such areas intervened by RSPN through TRDP during the phase II of Tahafuz project.

During last week of Oct 2014, tropical cyclone Nilofar was expected to hit coastal area of southern Sindh. “It was extremely frightening when warning issued by government and local administration about Nilofar” Mashooq Ali revealed. “In order to obtain detailed information about the threat and inform the community well in time”, he added, “An emergency meeting of V/UDMC members was called. During the meeting, it was decided that an emergency response team should be formed to disseminate information about threat among the community on urgent basis. Similarly other members of emergency response team were assigned the duty to be in contact with government officials, and local administration for receiving updates about Nilofar. With collective financial contribution of UDMC members, banners and posters were displayed at public places, especially outside the hospital, mosques, and banks.
Information regarding safety measures to be taken during hazardous situations, information about rescue places and important telephone numbers of government officials and President/Managers were also shared with community.

“It was encouraging to see community member’s involvement in displaying the banners and posters” said Mashooq Ali. CBDRM Tahafuz, hence, was quite successful in enabling community to develop plans, hold emergency meeting, and develop Emergency Response Teams. “I am thankful to RSPN and TRDP for encouraging people to believe in themselves”, Mashooq Ali expressed while applauding USAID’s financial support for making people understand that “An effort made for others lift us above ourselves”.

Members UDMC Bustaan of District Umerkot Shared contact numbers of various President/Managers. To updates onself about Nilofar, the community are told to contact these numbers