

## Where there is a will, there is a way!

Budipur Machian village is located in Union Council Akramabad of District Rahim Yar Khan. It has a population of approximately 2000 and is at a 12 km distance from Rahim Yar Khan. There are public school facilities however public health, adequate sanitation and water supply facilities do not exist in the village. There are no Basic Health Units (BHUs) in the area; the population of the village is severely deprived of basic health



facilities. Literacy rate and education level is also very low. There is no awareness on reproductive health and birth spacing; the average number of children in a family is six.

Samina Parveen has been residing in Budipur Machian for the last two decades. She owns a small house in the village. After completing her matriculation she immediately got married. She gave birth to three children, two boys and one girl. Unfortunately, her husband passed away four years ago leaving her in complete distress. At that time she was in great trouble as she had to manage the household expenses herself along with raising three children.

National Rural Support Program (NRSP) RYK team visited her village and conducted a community meeting to introduce the participants to the PSI-RSPN “Provision of Reproductive Health Services through Social Marketing” project. The meeting resulted in the formation of a Village Health Committee (VHC). The VHC was assigned to select a Community Resource Persons (CRPs) from within the community. VHC trusted Samina and selected her as CRP along with her family member Zahid Hussain as a male CRP. NRSP trained them on the project interventions and gave them the task to educate locals on reproductive health through group meetings and monthly household visits. The purpose for this practice was to firstly, create awareness on reproductive health and child spacing and secondly, enable access to contraceptive methods for the villagers in the area.

Samina was directed to register all Married Women of Reproductive Age (MWRAs) in her area, visit them monthly and refer them to a service provider for birth spacing methods. She is now working with 150 MWRAs. Based on her efforts, 80 new users of contraceptive methods have been registered in the area. In response to her service to the community, NRSP pays her an honorarium of Rs. 1000 per month.

She was introduced to Business in a Box (BiB) approach 12 months ago. As she was already skilled for community mobilization and reproductive health issues, she easily incorporated social marketing in her capabilities. NRSP provided her bag filled with 16 different items to be used by MWRAs in their daily routine for example soup, sanitary pads, shampoo, iodized salt and



contraceptives. She started social marketing in her village and successfully sold all the items. People also started demanding consumables beyond her BiB list i.e. toothpaste, brush, cough syrup and other kitchen items. She enhanced her business by adding the items of highly demand, which enabled her to make a good profit. She states that in the first quarter, she earned Rs. 350 per month, in the second quarter it went up to Rs. 600/month, in third quarter Rs. 800 per month and in the last quarter she earned Rs. 1100 per month. BiB enabled her to sustain her income, educate her children and provide for her family, while serving her community.

She believes that BiB is the right way to sustain the services in the community. She says, “The profit will function as the alternative of my honorarium and will enable me to continue working on educating the community on reproductive health. As it is a good cause, I will continue working on it throughout my life. I hope that by expanding my business I can earn more and fulfill the community needs to maximum level. I see my future bright and hope for the best of my children. I would say that this is the way to sustain the services and education level in the community beyond the project life.” Samina is grateful to RSPN and NRSP for the project, as not only has it empowered her to sustain herself and her family, it has brought a positive change in the community.