

CREATING A COMMUNITY-BASED SELF-SUSTAINING ECOSYSTEM FOR IMPROVING SELF-CARE

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BACKGROUND

Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in the world with 220 million population. The current fertility rate stands at 2.4% which poses an adverse impact on maternal and child health and puts the burden on the healthcare system to cater to the needs of people in Pakistan by providing them with affordable, accessible, and quality sexual and reproductive health-related products and services. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), around 70% of the population in the country goes to private sector healthcare practitioners for the provision of their healthcare needs. Considering current inflation, economic crisis, and cultural and social taboos, access to self-care services particularly in rural and underserved areas for women and young girls, remains a challenging issue. To improve access and ensure the convenience of women, social mobilization is an effective approach where community educators/counselors can reach women in their households, give them information, and counsel them for the uptake of self-care services.

OBJECTIVES

To establish proof of concept for sustainable community women-led self-care interventions by demonstrating that:

- At least **5,000** women obtain counseling (information about reproductive health, puberty, menstrual hygiene, family planning, post-abortion care, nutritional deficiencies iron, vitamins, calcium, newly married couple counseling, pre-marital counseling, and breast cancer awareness) and eligible services (it includes screening services like BP check, sugar check, HB check, temperature check, pregnancy testing, height weight check) from Sabz Sitaras House in eighteen months.
- **08** out of 10 Sabz Sitaras Homes can sustain the services beyond eighteen months of salary support to the Sitaras Houses.



METHODOLOGY

The Community Worker (Sitaras Baji) House was designated a confined home-based solution for women seeking self-care information and services. The Sitaras House focused on delivering a Self-Care package via trained Sitaras Baji which will include menstrual health and hygiene, mental health awareness and breast self-examination, pregnancy testing, and Family Planning Continuation. The Sitaras Bajis and their homes were equipped with digital devices for connectivity with a telehealth clinic housed at Greenstar's 24/7 call center to increase privacy and reduce stigma, biases, and costs of healthcare to clients.



RESULTS

- 10 Sitaras Bajis have registered 31,038 community women and girls through regular door-to-door visits and neighborhood meetings (NHMs) in Sitaras Houses in their selected Union Councils (UCs) in Lyari
- 8,332 women have obtained self-care services at Sitaras Houses.
- 5,470 units of healthcare products distributed by Sitaras Bajis for income generation.
- 10 Sitaras Bajis have earned an average income of PKR 15,000 per month and a cost-to-income ratio of 20 percent.



CONCLUSION

There is a need to develop comprehensive provincial guidelines for community-provided self-care interventions and a mechanism to report these services.



EMPOWERED WOMEN OF LYARI

Creating a community based self sustaining ecosystem of self-care access in Lyari

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10 Sitaras Houses in Lyari

A safe space for women and young girls to access self-care

- Door to door visits, neighborhood meetings and visits at Sitaras Houses for creating awareness about self-care (sexual and reproductive health, family planning, post-abortion care, information about breast, cervical and ovarian cancers, menstrual hygiene, and women nutrition)
- Financial sustainability of Sitaras Bajis through sales of healthcare products, basic screening services and referrals
- Integrating technology by connecting clients with expert doctors for consultations and POXCHO helpline for information

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Inauguration of the first Family Health Center (FHC) in Lyari to improve the access of quality of care

Group picture of Dr. Rab, CEO Greenstar with the Sitaras Bajis and community women on the occasion of 'Awareness on Gender based Violence'

Training of Sitaras Baji by Dr. Sidish Ahsan Piel on value clarification and attitude transformation