



A Model That Works: Educating the Women of Pakistan

DKT joins hands with Samina Peerzada to spread awareness

With a population of 194 million, [Pakistan](#) is the sixth largest country in the world. If current rates continue, Pakistan will become the fifth biggest by 2050. Although the fertility rate has declined on a national level from 4.9 children per woman in 1990-91 to 3.8 in 2012 - 2013, it has not changed much for women who are poor and in rural areas. In its *State of the World's Mothers* 2014 report, Save the Children ranked Pakistan 147th out of 178 countries in its Mothers' Index which assesses the well-being of mothers.

To address these issues, DKT International established a program in 2012 working in partnership with national and local governments, in particular with the Ministry of Health and the Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Program of the provincial governments with funding from the British Department for International Development (DFID) and the Packard Foundation.

These partnerships are critical as family planning, birth control, proper healthcare for children and women, are topics that are not discussed very often in Pakistan and are even considered taboo most of the time.

DKT reaches Pakistani couples and more than six million women (20.1% of married women of reproductive age) with an unmet need for contraception through [social marketing](#) of condoms like [Josh](#) and [Prudence](#) and other contraceptives like [Heer IUDs](#) and [oral and injectable contraceptives](#) in traditional and non-traditional sales outlets. Through [social franchising](#) in DKT's [Dhanak Health Care Centers](#) network of midwife-owned and managed clinics ("dhanak" means rainbow in Urdu). The *Dhanak* clinics emphasize long-term methods (such as [IUDs](#)), adding diversity to a method mix that is heavily dependent on short-term contraceptives. Most of these clinics are renovations of existing clinics but some are newly constructed. In its first two years, 600 *Dhanak* clinics were opened with experienced and professional midwives who give guidance and counselling to families about mother and child health care and family planning. Where over 21 million families all over the country have already benefited.

Both the social marketing and social franchising are focused on rural areas of Pakistan where 65% of the people live and where there are few health care providers and outlets for modern contraception.

In rural villages, DKT operates three mobile video units that put on events and activities in rural villages for both women and men. The shows entertain and educate people on their family

planning option, and refer them to the nearest *Dhanak*. DKT expects to have a total of six vehicles rolling by the end of the year. And, in suburban areas, DKT implements “Dhanak Corners” — small, pop-up stands in front of pharmacies that dispense family planning advice and motivates women to visit the nearest *Dhanak Health Care Center*.

For example, a recent activity in Sargodha, featured special guest [Samina Peerzada](#), an award winning film and television actress, producer and director, who interacted with the attendees and gave them tips regarding clean living, family planning, reproductive health, the value of age gaps between children and provided them with information about Heer IUDs.

Men, as the major decision makers when it comes to their families, were also included in the activity and provided with vital information regarding the importance of the health and well being of their wives and children. To make the activity even more interactive a drama was acted which portrayed the life of a man sunk deep in troubles and getting himself out to a better life.

Such activities get communities involved in raising awareness about a taboo topic and greatly help in improving the quality of life of the women of Pakistan. The activity ended with a lucky draw and Samina Peerzada’s words of encouragement to the women who are already working on bringing a change in their lives.



Different tactics are tested to promote family planning and sexual and reproductive health respectfully, but consistently, within the cultural boundaries of Pakistan. [TV advertisements](#) creatively promote family planning in the Pakistani context reaching an estimated 98 million people.

In 2014 alone, 18.4 million condoms, 578,033 oral contraceptives, 125,580 packages of emergency contraception and 82,700 IUDs, delivering a total of 841,804 couple years of protection were made available in Pakistan.



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