



# HP+

## Achievements in Pakistan

January 2018

## Fostering Media Engagement in Family Planning

### Our Work:

HP+ engaged with representatives of print, broadcast, and online media outlets to equip them with the knowledge and skills to report more effectively on topics related to population, development, and family planning. The initiative began with a three-day workshop on 'Exploring the Links between Family Planning and Development' in which 27 members of the media from across Sindh participated.

The workshop highlighted the important link between rapid population growth and economic development, and addressed myths and misconceptions around different family planning methods, particularly male-controlled methods. HP+ trained participants on how to cover these topics in the media, develop ideas for producing reliable and interesting feature stories, and how to pitch their stories to editors for publishing.

Regular media coverage of population issues keeps policymakers and others informed about family planning and reproductive health statistics, as well as the challenges and needs of communities and households in Sindh.

**'The biggest issues facing Pakistan are the booming population growth and the lack of awareness across the board regarding how big a threat this poses to the country's progress. Simply put, the country has too many people and not [enough] matching resources in the spheres of food, health, education, and employment systems.'**

– Farahnaz Zahidi, *The News on Sunday*

The initiative also informed participants about the Sindh government's FP2020 commitments and the Sindh Costed Implementation Plan (CIP) for Family Planning. Additional topics included the province's commitments to increase its contraceptive prevalence rate, reduce unmet need for family planning, and improve availability of and access to long-acting reversible methods for married women of reproductive age.

### Results:

Following the media workshop, nine journalists each published an article on topics related to population, development, and the CIP in national and regional newspapers. Based on the articles, HP+ selected eight

journalists from the following newspapers to participate in a five-month fellowship: *Awami Awaz*, *Dawn*, *Express Tribune*, *Nawa-e-Waqt*, and *the News*.

**‘In Pakistan, the concept of family planning becomes an issue for many because a [woman’s right] to conceive or postpone her pregnancy collides with the tradition of having large families. What they do not know is that family planning ensures a secure, healthy and happy life.’**

– *Shazia Tasneem, The Express Tribune*

HP+ supported the Reproductive Health Journalism Fellows to develop and publish stories focusing on family planning and development. The fellowship aimed to maintain a continued focus on the progress of CIP execution and the impact of population growth on development in Sindh in the mainstream media. The fellows have published articles in highly reputable national and local newspapers such as *Awami Awaz*, *Dawn*, *Express Tribune*, and *the News*.

**‘If this province has any hope of attaining success with regards to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, FP [family planning] will have to be a key focus. It is hoped that the CIP fulfills its aims, and alongside effective FP, also positively impacts literacy and education in Sindh, as well women’s empowerment via increased work participation and economic self-sufficiency.’**

– *Farahnaz Zahidi, The News on Sunday*

Following the success of the media workshop, HP+ supported the CIP Secretariat to establish a media forum to increase focus on and coverage of family planning and reproductive health issues in the media. The forum gained high-level interest and commitment from policymakers and media houses alike and now serves as a platform to raise awareness of population and development issues, including implementation of family planning policies and services.

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