Laying the Foundations for a Better Future

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For most teenagers, making decisions that will impact the future of their entire families is not an immediate responsibility. But for Farhana, member of the Village Organisation (VO) Kachi Pull in Taluka Qubo Saeed Khan, it was a make or break decision two years ago.

A resident of the village Abdul Wahab Khoso, Farhana had never been sent to school and was married by the time she was fifteen to a seventeen-year-old boy named Ahmad Khan. Within two years she was the mother of a son.

Farhana was married at age 15 and is now a mother of two young boys at 19. She has helped turn her and her husband’s fortunes around through her Community Investment Fund (CIF) loan.
Farhana’s elder son plays with his cousin on a mound of building material Farhana’s husband salvaged from their destroyed home.
Ahmad’s brother gave them a place to live temporarily with his own family and the establishment of a Community Organisation (CO) under Sindh Rural Support Organisation’s (SRSO) SUCCESS Programme after a comprehensive area survey proved to be a boon for Farhana.
As a housewife responsible for her family’s nutrition, Farhana was unimpressed with the variety of vegetables available in their village.

It was now the year 2017 and Farhana had given birth to a second son. She pitched the idea of opening a vegetable stall to her husband. He liked her suggestion. Inspired by the Micro Investment Plans (MIP) designed under SUCCESS, she applied for a loan under the Community Investment Fund (CIF) from her CO and received Rs. 10,000.
Now, Farhana’s husband Ahmad selects the finest vegetables he can find from the nearest town and brings a large selection every day on his brother’s motorbike to sell on his stall.
Ahmad’s vegetable stall has been a hit with locals and with small restaurants in the area that serve hundreds of truck drivers and other customers who pass through the village. The produce that he sells is fresh and displayed neatly according to wishes and creative direction of his wife.
Ahmad encourages his customers to select the vegetables they want to buy themselves from his stall, his way of assuring them of the quality he offers. He is proud to have the largest variety of seasonal vegetables on his stall.
Farhana proudly states that they earn up to Rs. 800 each day. After spending money on daily needs like petrol for the bike, groceries and milk for the children, they have Rs. 500 left for saving. Farhana is diligent in saving this money and has already paid back three installments of Rs. 800 of the CIF loan.

“My elder son is 3 years old and my younger son is a year old. I want them to have what I couldn’t have,” she says with conviction. “I want them to have a home and an education, and I want them to grow up seeing the value of hard work.”
Farhana commands the respect of her in-laws and other family members, and has convinced her brother-in-law and his wife to send their children, girls and boys both, to school as well as to get them inoculated. She wants to set a good example for her own boys.

She laughs shyly and adds, “I also want them to understand the value in women’s work and strength. I am their mother and I have thrived because of SRSO and SUCCESS. When they grow up, I want them to see all of us CO and VO members doing work to support our families as a normal part of life. Women are just as intelligent and important as men!”

Ahmad, with a smile, nods his head to agree with his resourceful wife.