

Faces of *change*



For a quarter century, Aga Khan Foundation U.S.A. (AKF USA) has been investing in people, extending a helping hand to communities and individuals so they may live with dignity and hope.

a sewing machine. She then set up a business stitching and selling ready-made clothes. She has taken several other loans for machinery and material. Each time she has paid back her loan in full and on time. Her monthly income has risen over six-fold from Rs. 1,000 (\$16) to Rs. 7,000 (\$120) in four years. She has been able to send her three children to a private school, extend her one room house, and set up a shop near her house.

Perhaps most importantly, she has gone beyond self-reliance to help those who are less fortunate than herself. She has hired six employees and conducts sewing classes for other women in the community. In 2004, in recognition of her efforts, Ms. Shahira was the recipient of the top prize in the United Nations Global Entrepreneurship Award for Pakistan.



Women and Development

Since 1982, the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) has been working with communities living along the slopes of formidable mountain ranges in Asia and facing the most challenging physical and socio-economic environment. The program is committed to facilitate the participation of women in the development process.

A STITCH IN TIME

In Mastuj, a remote area in the Chitral district of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province, Ms. Shaira, a young, recently divorced woman with three children feared that she would not be able to make ends meet. Tradition held that women should not work outside the home, further complicating her efforts to generate income. In 1998, she applied to AKRSP for training in sewing. Soon after her course, she took out an AKRSP loan, which included business training, to buy

RAINWATER HARVESTING

Moti Morsal in Gujarat, India is home to 150 poor families. This village is settled on the bank of the seasonally rain-fed Bhogavo River, which hardly fills water needs during the monsoon season. Determined to be proactive about the situation, the village women approached AKRSP to deal with the water scarcity issue. In the adjoining village of Maghrikhada, AKRSP had assisted villagers in constructing roof rainwater harvesting structures. AKRSP asked the village women to form a village level committee and partner with AKRSP. Initially, the village men formed a village level committee, and discouraged women from participating. But the Moti Marsal women were not deterred and created an informal group consisting of 15 members. This membership increased to 30 in a few months and were given the formal status of an association called Mahila Vikas Mandal.

The people of Moti Morsal have benefited from AKRSP's help. 62% of the households have installed the rainwater harvesting systems.



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