

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING IN SERBIA



*Mitic Nega with her family and neighbors from Gornji Komren at the RH&FP lecture*



*Reconstruction of Health Center within CRDA program: opening ceremony in Manojlovce*

NIS, SERBIA – USAID and CHF, as a part of Community Revitalization through Democratic Action (CRDA) program, recently started with Women Reproductive Health and Family Planning program (WRH&FP) in the communities of Southern and Eastern Serbia. The objective of this program is to encourage citizens to do something for their reproductive health and the health of their families. For the campaign CHF received help from experts in WRH&FP field. Together, 9 TV spots and 9 radio jingles were produced, many printed materials were prepared and organized lectures conducted in CRDA communities.

Gornji Komren community is situated in Municipality of Nis. Turkish papers from 1498 are proof that Gornji Komren is a very old place. Today, Komren is a village with almost 1000 inhabitants. A large percentage of the population is young people. The old custom in Komren is that girls get married and give a birth even before 15. This is why young mothers often have problems during and after giving a child birth.

Mitic Nega (57), pensioner from Gornji Komren, has been coming to the lectures with her daughter Marina (42) and grandchildren Alexander and Nikola. Nega gave birth at 15 years of age and had many problems due to the early birth. She is counseling her grandchildren and other youngsters not to follow her, and her daughter who also was married and gave

birth at 15. "When I say this to my grandchildren they say that they do not want to listen to me, because I did not listen to my parents. This is why those lecturers are good. Young people and my grandsons have the opportunity to hear what experts in this area say about this".

Evica Zivkovic (45), local community president attends these lectures as well. Evica has two children and three grandchildren. She spoke about her experiences as a young mother and the problems that she faced... "My life would have been much easier if there had been someone that gave me advice and learned those things that I heard at the lecture. I gave birth at 15 and didn't know anything about these things. My baby was small and sick very often. These lectures offer exactly what young people and others should know..."

19-year old student Natalija Veljkovic said that she didn't know with whom to speak openly about these things "I was ashamed that my mother and my friends do not know anything about these things..." 18-year old Miljan Spasic said that he likes the topics and that he will come next time with his girlfriend.

Some health centers in the area will be equipped with the necessary medical equipment for the improvement of reproductive health. In addition several health centers will be reconstructed as a part of CRDA program.