

HEALTH AND FAMILY IN SPANCEVAC NEAR BUJANOVAC



Nena with her neighbours at lectures: "Our women from the south are especially vulnerable"



Family planning should be discussed: Nena Jovanovic with her daughter Katarina

SPANCEVAC, SERBIA – Women from the village of Spancevac in Bujanovac municipality have had an opportunity to attend lectures on reproductive health and family planning for the first time. These lectures are part of wider CRDA program (Community Revitalization through Democratic Action), funded by USAID and implemented by CHF in eastern and southern Serbia.

Jovanovic Nena from Spancevac says she is very often ashamed of seeing how women live. "Our women from the south are especially vulnerable and apart from being neglected by the society, they alone do not take care of themselves". Though in the very beginning women from Spancevac were very sceptical, soon they realised that these lectures were very important for the family as a whole. They attended lectures in large number in a room of a cooperative that was completely neglected, until recently.

Instead of doing housework and farm the land, Nena Jovanovic allots time for herself and her family. Nena has two children, a daughter Katarina (14) and a son Aleksandar (10). Nena used to practise sport for 15 years and was a part of a young handball team of Yugoslavia. In the morning hours, Nena works in a shop located in the centre of Spancevac while in the afternoon hours, she farms the land. "I am not ashamed of work. We lease land, as we do not have enough land of our own,

and a part of what we produce is given to the owner, while the rest remains for my family. All what my husband and I do, we do for our children. We started from zero, and now we have everything we need".

Nena does not like anything related to medicine and she says she does not trust doctors, except for doctor Lola who holds lectures. "I heard all the best about doctor Lola long time ago. I simply wanted to meet him. I attended all the lectures that CHF organized here. Every week, the doctor introduces us with new topics and I do not hesitate to pose questions of importance for my family and myself. The doctor is able to express himself in a plain language that everybody understands. Sometimes, even drawing helps".

Every week, new women are coming to lectures. Older women are difficult to persuade. "They are very shy to discuss and listen to such issues, but we agreed that we should somehow make them come here", said Nena Jovanovic, who always breaks the ice when other women are shy... "Very often we forget that a lack of care or caution can destroy one's self or a family. For this reason, it's very important that such lectures are organised in Spancevac, too", said Nena. This year, school in Spancevac has been renovated and everyone hope that one of next year's key projects will be water supply for Spancevac. "If this would be the case, there would be no reason to flee this region".