SUCCESS STORY

Mahinoor Begum’s fight against poverty

Mahinoor Begum is 32 years old and lives in Dakshin-Purba Kalbari, which is in Polder 43/2F in Patuakhali. She got married 17 years ago, when she was only 15 years old. As a beloved daughter of her father, he gave her a gift of 2 buffalos at her marriage. Mahinoor’s husband Zahangir is a hard worker and knows agricultural farming very well, but he has not enough land to feed his family. Therefore he migrates seasonally to Gazipur District to work at the brick-fields, which is painful for them both as it leads them to live separate for several months each year.

By selling the 2 buffalos, Zahangir and Mahinoor bought a piece of land of 66 decimals (about 2,600 square meters) for building their house and homestead. But as the land was medium-high, and not suitable for a home they had to take a loan of 80,000 Taka to upgrade the land. They excavated a pond of 30 decimal and raised the remaining 36 decimal to highland and built a home on it to live in.

The loan had put the family in great debt, so for more income Zahangir went again to the brick fields while Mahinoor tried to grow some vegetables in her homestead. She managed to grow some, but often it was not enough for her own consumption.

When in December 2013 the Blue Gold Program started a farmer Field School in her village, Mahinoor became one of the active participants. She felt herself very proud to be a member of this FFS, and whatever she learned in the FFS sessions, she immediately practiced at her homestead area. Her pond-dike became productive as she grew country bean on the outside of the pond-dike and on the inner side she grew sweet gourd, bottle gourd and bitter gourd. At the boundary of her homestead area she planted papaya and on the area in front of her house she planted brinjal (eggplant). For this she grew seedlings in a separate seed bed.

Following what she learned in the FFS, Mahinoor does not use any pesticides in her vegetable garden but instead uses hand picking of pests and she uses pheromone traps.
Mahinoor:

“During last winter season I spent 3,000 Taka for seeds and land preparation and all the work I did on my own to keep production cost low. Last week I sold country bean and brinjal and earned 750 taka. I am only harvesting once a week, but soon I can harvest brinjal twice a week. I think that in the next 2 months I may get about 1,300 Taka per week. After that the production will go on. So I have already started other vegetables like okra and chili peppers. I have 35 papaya plants and if each produces 4 fruits I may earn another 10,000 Taka from that.”

Mahinoor is very happy with her vegetable production, but has also learned in the FFS about poultry rearing. She prepared an improved hazal and she has built an improved two-stored poultry house.

Mahinoor:

“I have now 5 hens, 14 chicks, 10 ducks and one pair of swan. Two of my hens are brooding with 22 and 15 eggs. My ducks are also laying eggs and the swan is brooding on 14 eggs.”

Recently Mahinoor has taken another loan to spend on vegetable production and on poultry feed. She now has to pay loan installments of 750 taka per week, but she doesn’t think it is a problem as she has a steady income from her vegetables and poultry.

Mahinoor:

“Blue Gold has been a blessing to my family. Recently I bought a “Guide & Suggestion Book” of 400 Taka for my 12 year old daughter. She will be sitting her PSC examination in November 2015. Earlier this was only a dream for me; it was a fantasy to spend even 10 Taka for education. I will now try to clear all my loans and then I will have my chicken farm and duck farm together with my homestead garden”.

Success story/4/2015

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