

Impact of Horizontal Learning program about poultry rearing

This Horizontal Learning program was held on 28 February 2018 in Chinguria village in P55/2A, where 25 women with their husbands (50 guests in total) from 5 different WMGs came to learn about the successful poultry rearing of 5 host women. These 5 women had earlier participated in poultry FFS, where after all had expanded their poultry farm, with earnings increasing to 5000 to 10,000 taka/month per woman. The Horizontal Learning program was initiated and organized by the gender coordinator and the polder team of Blue Gold program.

Before they attended the HL program, these women were not or hardly involved in poultry rearing, mainly because earlier attempts had been unsuccessful as the poultry mortality rate was high due to not using vaccinations. They neither knew about other improved technologies for poultry rearing. During the HL program they learned from the host women how they had started their successful poultry rearing, including about the importance of vaccination and other technologies, such as proper chicken houses and the use of a hazal¹. The 25 guest women were supposed to replicate these technologies by themselves, with some follow-up by polder staff and the gender coordinator.

The main investments to start up backyard poultry rearing are a chicken house and some chicken, the costs of which are usually modest, especially when locally available building materials are used. A hazal can be made without costs by using mud. Vaccination and feed costs are also modest. In total about 2000-3000 taka investment costs are needed before the first eggs or birds can be sold.

17 months after the HL program, on 24 July 2019, Roksana Begum, gender coordinator, Md. Nazrul Islam Jewel, socio-economist, and S. Nahar, CDF, visited the homesteads of 10 women, 9 of whom had been guests at the HL program, to find out what the impact of the HL program had been for them. The selection of the visited women was ad random. All had one or more poultry houses constructed after attending the HL program. Below the findings from the visit are presented.

1. Halena Begum

She has now 85 chicken. Per month she sells birds for 5000-10,000 taka²; last year she sold for 1 lakh taka, and she gave 60,000 taka to her son-in-law, who had a financial crisis. Poultry is the only earning source of their family; before they were extreme poor. Husband and wife are both involved in the poultry rearing activities. They use the income to meet all household expenditure such as food, child education, clothing, medicines, entertainment and socializing. Now they are happy, their well-being improved as well as their status in society.

2. Jobeda Begum

She has 48 chicken. Monthly she sells for 3000-5000 taka. Some time ago she bought two goats; now she has four. She uses the income for child education, clothes, house repair and other household expenditure.

3. Dolly Begum

She has 40 small and big chicken and 16 ducks. Before the HL program she only had one chicken. She sells per month for 5000-6000 taka birds and (duck) eggs³. Recently Dolly

¹ Definition of hazal: (still to be added, after checking with Munir)

² All women informed about the gross value of their sales; the actual profit is less because of the costs for feed and vaccination.

³ Chicken eggs are usually sold at 8 take each; duck eggs fetch more, e.g. 10 taka each. In case of collective action for selling, this can increase to 10 and 13 taka, respectively.

bought land for Tk 10,000 in the name of herself and her husband. Now she can take decisions in her family and her family respects her more.

4. Taslima

She has 35 small and big chickens and 18 ducks. Per month she sells for 2000-3000 taka chicken and duck eggs. Jointly with her husband's income she pays for her children's education, food and household expenditure.

5. Morjina

She has 90 chickens and 14 ducks. Before the HL program she had 4 ducks. Per month she sells for 5000-7000 taka birds and duck eggs. Mojina spends monthly 2000-3000 taka on child education, entertainment, food, house repair, clothes and other household expenditure. She also saves some money. She is widow with a son and a daughter. With the income she can maintain her family.

6. Fatehma

She did not attend the HL program herself, but her neighbour did, and Fatehma learnt from her neighbour. Recently she started the chicken rearing. She has now 11 chicken and one chicken house. She is not earning yet, but will do so soon.

7. Anowara Begum

She attended the HL program, but has only 4 chicken. She is sick and therefore she cannot look after the chicken now. Before she got sick, she had more chicken and sold for 5000 taka in total.

8. Joynob

She has 17 big chicken and 20 ducks. Last month she sold chicken for 5000 taka and ducks for 9000 taka, and eggs for 2000 taka (in total 16,000 taka). This was exceptional and due to Eid, as usually she sells for 5000- 7000 taka per month. She contributed money to repair their house. And monthly she has some savings. Now she received more respect from her family members, relatives and in the community.

9. Runi

She has 17 big chicken, no small chicken, and 20 ducks. She is a student, recently divorced, living on her own. Last month she sold for 14,000 taka (as it was Eid); usually it is 2000-4000 taka. She can cover all her expenditure from her income, including making dresses for her own, travel cost and education fees.

10. Rehena

She has 53 chicken. Monthly she sells chicken for 2000-3000 taka. She has a husband, who recently bought a tractor to cultivate the land. Rehena contributed 10,000 taka from her savings to her husband's purchase of the tractor. Rehena also contributes to her children's education. The understanding and mutual respect between husband and wife have been increased.

Conclusion: All visited women had implemented poultry rearing after having attended the HL program, often with some follow-up support by CDFs, but the HL program had triggered their

interest and motivation. All women now are earning from poultry rearing, except one, who fell ill and therefore cannot look after poultry. The example of Fatehma, a neighbour of a HL program participant, demonstrates that replication can also continue after the HL program. When the poultry rearing becomes lucrative, men start helping their wives. Women's confidence and respect increased, including a better cooperation with their husbands, also leading to more joint-decision-making and increased well-being.

All women, except the sick one, are now quite substantially contributing to the income of their household, for some of them the poultry income is the main source of income, including for Runi, a student living on her own. Income of poultry rearing is usually first used for education of children, food, clothing and other regular household expenditure, improving their livelihoods. More than half of the women used part of the income for other purposes, such as buying land, goats, contribution to tractor, for house repair, savings or for a family member in financial crisis.

There is no risk that markets for poultry become saturated, as the demand for "desi murgi" (local variety chicken which are locally reared) is huge, also from urban areas. Hence, backyard poultry rearing using modern technologies and with access to vaccination is a good and effective opportunity for women's empowerment and poverty reduction, which can be quite easily replicated. More formal or informal HL exchanges to increase the proportion of women and men who can learn about improved technologies for poultry rearing and the opportunities for increasing household income.