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World Vision



Nobo Jatra
Case Study
Fanna

“A young woman, defies the odds and leads the way”

**Transcending expectations
and
social norms in rural Bangladesh**



World Food Programme



WINROCK INTERNATIONAL



Fanna, aged 18, has a quiet demeanor with a face that often breaks into a radiant and exuberant smile. Hailing from a remote village in Satkhira, located in the south west coastal region of Bangladesh, Fanna is recovering from a serious illness that stopped her from attending school at age 16, effectively ending her bid to sit for the secondary school certificate exams. With 8 siblings including 3 sisters and elderly parents, Fanna's family subsist on their father's nominal income from making fishing nets. They own no cultivable land and life was pretty much hand to mouth for as long as Fanna can remember. All of Fanna's sisters were married by the age of 15, a common phenomenon amongst vulnerable rural families in Bangladesh.

Despite these odds, Fanna refused to sit idle during her prolonged illness taking care to

complete all her household chores. With little or no livelihood opportunities available to Fanna beyond day labor, or working as a domestic help in neighboring homes given the limited income opportunities and social norms that curb women's participation paid work, Fanna's entrepreneurial knack first emerged when she identified tuition as a part time job that could be undertaken from her home. As Fanna resolutely states, *"Where there is a will, there is always a way. If you want something badly, I believe you have to strive for it and seize any feasible opportunity that comes your way."* With this mindset, she began teaching 14 children between the ages of 3-8 and earning 800 taka per month all of which she contributed towards the treatment of her ailing mother and for her own medication.



With an eagerness to pursue any other viable opportunity and a willingness to learn, Fanna learned about a World Vision led training scheme on embroidery from a project extension worker. Immediately curious and hopeful, Fanna fit the criteria for participants and was subsequently enrolled in the alternative livelihoods scheme, part of an integrated portfolio of interventions under the World Vision led USAID Development Food Assistance Project ‘Nobo Jatra – new beginning’. The training designed by Nobo Jatra, places youth at the forefront and focuses on fostering sustainable employment and income from a diverse mix of livelihood activities designed to make households more resilient. Crucially, this opportunity is unique as many youth, particularly adolescent girls and young women in rural Bangladesh, are failing to make a successful transition from school (whatever level they complete) to work, an important issue recognized and addressed by the Nobo Jatra project. To address the poverty and economic status of households, Nobo Jatra identifies viable alternative income activities given the local context and targets 18,000 poor and extreme poor beneficiaries including youth and ensures a benchmark 65% of participants are women.

Fanna describes the opportunity as a *“dream beyond my wildest imagination. This kind of opportunity is unheard of in this area.”* Through the alternative livelihoods scheme, Fanna, with quiet encouragement from her proud parents, along with the other 15 youth participated in an intense 12 day training provided by a local business on ‘karchupi’ – a form of embroidery. Nobo Jatra identifies small and medium scale

home based manufacturing of embroidered, tailored or sewn products as a feasible and profitable income generating activity with ensured market demand and opportunity to link with markets. Crucially, it also provides potential and scope to incorporate women and youth, a critical target group for Nobo Jatra, and is also suitable for the region given the chronic challenges of water logging and salinity coupled with rapid onset disasters such as cyclone Aila all of which impede agricultural gains.

With great excitement and commitment, Fanna successfully completed the process and has already received her first order from the same business that provided the training. Remarkably, she will earn 900 taka per cloth she embroiders catapulting her monthly earnings to an average of 10000-12000 taka – a substantial amount of money particularly for a young women in rural Bangladesh. Fanna’s parents are overjoyed at their daughters turn in fate and echo her sentiments in saying, *“we could not even have dreamed such a reality for our daughters. Fanna has changed everything for us. She is our future hope.”*

The ever present entrepreneurial spirit in Fanna is unmistakable. She is already thinking about enrolling in the Nobo Jatra entrepreneurial literacy training to further hone her skills to improve numeracy and life skills, business planning and financial capacity leading to better access to finance. Ever the optimist, Fanna has one goal; *“a better future for me and my family. To avoid the same fate as my sisters and stand on my own feet. And who knows, I may even start my own embroidery business and employ all my friends!”*



About 'Nobo Jatra-new beginning'

'Nobo Jatra-New Beginning' is a five year USAID Food for Peace Title II Development Food Security Activity that seeks to improve gender equitable food security nutrition and resilience in southwest Bangladesh. World Vision Bangladesh (WVB), together with the World Food Programme (WFP) and Winrock International and 3 local partner NGOs, implement the project, integrating interventions in Maternal Child Health and Nutrition, Water Sanitation and Hygiene, agriculture and alternative livelihoods, Disaster Risk Reduction, good governance and social accountability and gender to achieve its objectives. Nobo Jatra is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) of the Government of Bangladesh in Dacope and Koyra Upazilas in Khulna and Shyamnagar and Kaliganj Upazilas in Satkhira.