

Fatima's Success Story

Fatima, a housewife, is part of a poor family along with her husband, her four children (two daughters and two sons) and her father-in-law. The family makes a living through keeping livestock: they own nine cows and four sheep. In addition to household affairs, Fatima takes care of feeding the animals, cleaning the stable, milking the cows, and processing food such as yogurt, oil, cheese and other products.

After staying in Iran for 20 years as refugee, Fatima returned back home with her family in 2004. She completed 8th grade education in Iran but then left school due to family challenges. Nonetheless, she did not quit her social activities. She worked voluntarily as head of the Community Development Council (CDC) within Haidar Abad and Now Abad villages. She also worked for four months assisting children suffering from malnutrition and educating the children in the village.

For enhancing the health and production of the livestock in Fatima's village, Dutch Committee for Afghanistan, funded by EU, conducted extension courses to improve the awareness of people regarding livestock husbandry. In these extension courses, participants learned through extension packages, posters, and fact sheets about vaccination and deworming of animals, and about recognition, prevention and treatment of animal diseases. In addition, other livestock subjects were discussed, like proper stable conditions, the seasonal animal health calendar, urea treatment of straw, and zoonotic diseases.

Fatima also joined these courses. She tells: "After participating in these extension courses for one year, I consulted some interested ladies and the Community Development Council to create a Self-Help Group." This Group, led by Fatima, was established with 27 female members. At inception, every member paid 100 Afs per month for saving purposes. After a while, when the amount of money saved was high enough, their first small business started by purchasing a cow. In the meantime, the members already took business training courses provided by DCA. After four months, the cow was sold with 13,000 Afs interest. The members decided to purchase the second one and they started a lamb fattening business by buying 10 lambs.

Although Fatima is busy with household activities and her social initiatives, she attended the Poultry Basic Veterinary Worker (BVW) course, supported by DCA. After graduation, she started her own small business. "During this course, I learned a lot about livestock and poultry. I want to share my experience and new knowledge with other women of the village. During the class, I learned about chicken husbandry, nutrition, chicken diseases and how to control them, vaccinations, incubation methods, and hatching", Fatima said.

She added: "I thank Dutch Committee for Afghanistan and the EU project and their staff who supported me and the other women of the village very much for all their efforts. They did so much in livestock development, capacity building and awareness raising of our people; they really changed our lives."