

# Farid: Fishing for life

Have you ever heard the saying: "Give me a fish and I eat for a day. Teach me to fish and I eat for a lifetime?" This story shows just what that saying means for Farid, his family and the community in Samuniapara, Bangladesh.

Farid's community used to live from day to day. They ate what they grew and struggled to produce enough food to survive.

Caritas' partners visited Samuniapara, listened to the people's concerns and helped them plan for the future. A village committee was formed. Training and support were provided by Caritas.

Farid and his family joined the group in 1998. They learnt how to farm fish and grow fruit and vegetables. With help from their neighbours, they dug a pond and filled it with baby fish. They now grow tomatoes, cucumbers, potatoes and chillies on the bank of the pond and mangoes, guava, olives and trees for timber. Much has changed.

Alpona, Farid's wife, has learnt to manage money at a Caritas supported savings group – an important example of *Fair Play Today*. Without a savings group, people are often forced to borrow from moneylenders who charge high interest rates and make it difficult to repay loans. Now, low interest rates allow people to set up small businesses.

Alpona shared her new knowledge with Farid and in 2003 they obtained the first of three loans from Caritas. They borrowed approximately \$23 and bought food for their baby fish. They repaid the loan before borrowing again. The second loan in 2004, approximately \$29, re-stocked the pond. The third loan in 2005 was a community loan to buy a cow, showing how the community themselves are involved in *Fair Play*, putting their resources together so they all enjoy the benefits a cow brings.

You can imagine how the loans benefited the family. Their health improved from the fresh food they produced. They sell what's left over at the local market to increase income. What they earn repays loans and buys medicine when necessary. Manure fertilises the vegetables and feeds algae in the pond that the fish eat.

After school, their son Homar helps in the vegetable garden, weeds the rice crop, feeds the fish and minds the cows.



PHOTO: SEAN SPRAGUE

The family shares what they grow with other family members and friends and are proud that they no longer have to buy food. Farid hopes to increase the size of his pond and rely less on his laboring

work. He and Alpona hope that Homar continues his schooling and works towards a better life.

In the dry season ponds are drained because water is needed for the vegetables. The community hopes to put in pumps so that ponds are always full.

"Before we received support from Caritas life was very difficult. It was hard to survive," said Farid.

**Through your support of Project Compassion, Farid's family learnt to fish. Now they have fish for life.**

## ART



Farid and his family are happy to share what they grow with family and friends. Draw a picture illustrating Farid, his family and friends enjoying a meal together. Draw a border around your picture. Then around the border draw all the changes in the family's life.

## SOSE/HSIE / Literacy



Watch the DVD on fish-farming in Bangladesh. Caritas programs aim to help communities work towards achieving the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Can you find evidence of the goals in the Bangladesh program? For a list of the goals see the Lifestyle Awareness Calendar.

*Dear God, when we learn new knowledge and skills, help us to use and share these gifts to build a world where there is Fair Play for all. Amen.*