

" The improved way of rearing chicken changed my life totally"



Mariam Paul tripled her income out of chicken rearing and feels now more confident to face the future.



IMPROVED POULTRY KEEPING CHANGES LIVES IN TANZANIA

Mariam Paul, 50, is a farmer in Sanjaranda, Manyoni district, Tanzania. Together with her husband she grows maize for subsistence and selling as well as sunflower and chicken for cash. While not the poorest in her village, Mariam was often short of cash when school fees were due or when an unforeseen occurrence happened. Money was always a worry and investment in new business ventures was not an option.

All this changed in 2009 when RLDC introduced an improved poultry keeping model in her village with the aim of empowering women. The idea was to promote the rearing of chickens as a business venture by forming a producers' group with specialised sub-tasks. Traditionally a women's task, rearing chickens efficiently requires low investment and can improve livelihoods markedly.

After getting training on chicken rearing and having vaccinated her chicken thanks to the help of dedicated members of the group, she experienced fewer deaths in her flock. She then built an improved pen that protects her chicken against theft or predators and allows her to provide supplementary feeding to her chicken instead of letting them get their food only out of scavenging. As a result, she now keeps 35 chickens (compared to less than 20 before) which are heavier, healthier and lay more eggs.

She currently makes an income of 360,000 TZS a year from chicken keeping, three times more than before the project started. This is a noticeable increase as the total income of her family reaches slightly less than 2 million TZS a year.

With the money, she invested in a cow in 2010 which supplies her children with milk. In 2011 she bought furniture for her living room. Now she is planning to send her three small children to secondary school whereas her three adult children could only attend primary school.

Perhaps more importantly, she feels proud of herself and has now a way of solving financial problems when they arise. In addition she has gained more respect from her husband and neighbours who ask her for advice about rearing chicken. This success story is bound to have a legacy as she shares the improved way of rearing chickens with her children and acquaintances.



An improved chicken pen in Sanjaranda village.