

Transformation Beyond Walls

In a remote village in Bangladesh, where healthcare centers are scarce, a young woman named Hira Chunni Panna is quietly transforming lives by addressing the nutritional needs of mothers and children. Known affectionately as “Pusti Apa” (Nutrition Sister), Hira has built a community support facility that provides care, knowledge, and hope to families who once had nowhere else to turn.

Hira always dreamed of becoming a nurse. After completing high school, she pursued formal nursing training, hoping to enter the healthcare field. But life took an unexpected turn. When Transforming Lives introduced her to its nutrition-based program, she was immediately interested and saw an opportunity that aligned with her passion.

“I was thinking of getting a job and then starting a small center focused on nutrition.” she recalls. “When the Transforming Lives team came with a similar idea, it gave me the confidence to start right away.”

Through Transforming Lives’ capacity-building program, Hira was equipped with business skills, nutrition knowledge, and a consistent supply of essential health products. Today, her center provides micronutrients to women, along with specially formulated food mixes for children experiencing low appetite and malnutrition.

In just one year, her center became a lifeline. She has reached nearly 200 underserved pregnant women, mothers, children under five, and adolescents, offering products that not only meet their nutritional needs but are also tasty enough to win over even the pickiest appetites. *“Many children don’t eat well. They lose their appetite, and then they suffer,” she explains. “The food mix (colorful vegetables, carbohydrates, oil, pulse, nut paste) helps. They enjoy the taste and still get the nutrition.”*

Thanks to the partnership between Transforming Lives and the District Health Administration in Bangladesh, Hira received formal recognition from the Civil Surgeon’s office which has allowed her to operate confidently as a trusted healthcare extension in her community.



Hira Chunni Panna at her community nutrition center in rural Bangladesh. | Photo © iDE Bangladesh

To support entrepreneurs like Hira, Transforming Lives partnered with national suppliers to ensure a consistent flow of high-quality products and provided a mobile-based sales tracking app that enables entrepreneurs to monitor progress, manage inventory, and plan for growth. Today, Hira earns around BDT 3,000 in monthly profit from BDT 7,000 (approximately USD 24 - 57) in sales—a 43% profit margin that supports her household and fuels her ambitions to grow. Yet her impact goes far beyond numbers.

Girls in her community now say they want to be like Hira. *“That’s how I know this work matters,” she says proudly. Word of her success has spread to neighboring villages, and Hira dreams of a future where no woman has to travel miles to access basic care. “Access to formal health services is limited in our area,” she says. “But my door is always open.”*