



PHOTO & CAPTION

Eggplant Grafting Transforms Life In Gaidghat



Photo: IPM CRSP/Miriam Rich

In Gaidghat, a small village in western Bangladesh, under the shade of a bamboo-framed thatch roof, Shovarani Kar and Trishna Rani Biswas sit and work with razor blades and eggplant seedlings. With quick and careful movement of hand on plant, the two women are able to graft a high-yielding variety of eggplant onto the rootstock of another variety that is resistant to a devastating soil-borne scourge: bacterial wilt.

The USAID-funded eggplant grafting program is part of an effort to reduce poverty in developing countries. Through training sessions, women throughout the district are learning how to perform this grafting. This simple technology reduces the need for pesticide applications and increases yields. Word has traveled that people in this village are now earning more because of improved agricultural practices, and villagers from surrounding towns and even distant villages travel regularly to Gaidghat to learn how to achieve the same results.

The women, who can each complete about 300 grafts a day, use the money they earn to purchase milk to improve their children's diet and to buy them clothing and school-related necessities such as books, notebooks, and pens. In the village of Gaidghat, all the children attend school, and health problems are down. Because the people are earning more, their social status has risen, and they are addressed with more respect. On a global scale, these changes are small, but they make a big difference in the lives and livelihoods of people like Shovarani Kar and Trishna Rani Biswas.

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