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### Rays of hope

Farida Begum was born in a family of Sataranji (hand made carpet) makers. When she was growing up, she also learnt the skills behind Sataranji making. In 1997 just after her marriage, she decided to start a business using her skills thus improving her family income. Her husband supported her initiative but the initial capital was very little. She started making Sataranjis and selling them from door to door. Day by day her business made slow progress and she engaged few other local women to work for her. But Farida was not happy with her business because her marketing opportunities were very narrow and she was selling her products only in her own district.

It was then when she came to know about Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BWCCI) from some local women entrepreneurs and decided to become a member in 2010. The Chamber was implementing a capacity building project in cooperation with US Embassy in Rangpur for women artisans like her at that time. Under that project, Farida received 4 trainings on Entrepreneurship Development and Business Management, Business Communication and Marketing, Accounting and Book keeping, and Product Identification, Product and Design Development. Farida says, "I was doing business but I started to think as an entrepreneur after these trainings". Not only this, Farida's confidence was stronger than before and she took part in a three day's Artisan Fair in Dhaka organized by BWCCI where she made a sale of Tk 22,500/= (USD 304). Farida was encouraged by this new experience because she never thought she would be able to bring her product in the capital city, let alone make such a huge sale. She also managed to network with many buyers who already ordered for her products.

Farida also shares, "I never knew that banks give loan to small-town entrepreneurs like me. But now the Chamber has given me the knowledge and I already applied for loan in a bank which I am hopeful to get very soon". Farida has changed for the better. Farida has learnt new business strategies. Farida is now on the way to make her business big, thus inspiring many other women entrepreneurs who would be the change makers of our country one day.