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Women's Business Centre Eye Exams Bring New Sight to Women In Chittagong Hill Tracts



When Rekha Chakma came to visit her local Women's Business Centre (WBC) after suffering from poor eyesight for the last 10 years. Never imagining she would receive the first eye exam she'd ever had in her life, Rekha received eye care services which gave her a new sight and a new opportunity to do the things she loves at a price that was affordable.

Rekha (48) resides in Nowapara village in Khagrachhari hill district. For her livelihood she does different types of work such as seed selection, cleaning rice and planting seedlings seasonally. She reads newspapers and watches TV regularly, but has been facing trouble to do all those kinds of activities as her vision became blurred in both eyes and she began to get regular headaches. Rekha didn't go to the doctor because she knew it would cost a lot and she couldn't afford it.

Recently with the support of EU funded LEAN project, Nowapara Women Business Centre (WBC) organized an eye camp in her village. Rekha became curious about that, and went to the WBC to see what happening there. She learned that with the support of Vision Spring, community people were getting eye screenings free of charge, receiving advice, and purchasing eye glasses for an affordable price from trained WBC members.

WBC member Sweety Chakma screened Rekha's eyes and found that she has been struggling with presbyopia, or "far sightedness" which is the inability to see objects that are close to you. Rekha was recommended to purchase +2.00 eye glasses, which cost 150 BDT, a significantly lower rate than available elsewhere.

After getting eyeglasses, her vision become clearer again, and hopes that this will enable her productivity, extend her work life, and continue to care for their family. She says, 'I am very happy to get my first pair of glasses'.

This is a whole new service offered by the centre and shows the change they are making for us." WBC members are planning to expand the business in near future as part of their mission to meet the needs of their community with affordable and impactful products and services.

