

Chicken, Ducks and Goats

Magda Rezkallah, a 39-year-old widow, lives in the remote village of Sharona in upper Egypt. She and her husband Nabil, a janitor at a pharmacy, had four children, three sons and a daughter, ranging in age from 21 to 8 years. Nabil had health issue, and after 18 years of marriage, he died suddenly of pulmonary failure.

Fortunately, Magda's in-laws allowed the family to stay in their home residing in a space measuring 100 square meters (1,075 sq. ft.). The only source of income is the monthly widow pension of 400 EGP (\$20 month; 80 cents/day). Magda is illiterate with no skills or work experience. The children attend a government school where the education is so poor that private tutoring has become the principal education track. Magda became isolated, dejected and trapped.



Finding Freedom through Friendship (FFF) and the Council of Services and Development (CSD) met Magda at her home. She shared her aspirations of raising chickens. Magda received 30 vaccinated chickens and enriched feed with a grant of 4,000 EGP (\$300). FFF and CSD also secured private tutoring for the children.

Unfortunately, the chickens died and the initial investment was lost. Magda took the initiative to purchase a few ducks. Sadly, most of the ducks also died. The small profit from the ducks became the payment for a few goats. The goats bring in a small profit. Finally, Magda's determination and persistence paid off.

As Magda's business grew, her confidence increased. FFF & CSD believe in the holistic approach to restore both the emotional and physical state so the individual can live to their utmost potential. With the regular visits by Marian, the team facilitator encouraged Magda to not give up and affirmed she was not alone.

Due to the loss of the poultry with widows, the FFF & CSD team concluded that poultry production is NOT a viable project for rural households. This is an opposing view to the prevailing theory that poultry production is an option to improving the economic status of women in rural areas of developing countries. The reality is poultry raising, especially in homes, fail and investments are lost. The reasons for failure vary and include:

1. Although owning animals is a sign of wealth, it is costly to feed and shelter poultry.
2. Training in animal husbandry is not easily available, leading to lack of knowledge of nutrition, housing, space, water and climate requirements that are necessary for a successful outcome.
3. Lack of available capital to purchase feed and bedding to prevent poultry overcrowding and disease.
4. Often, the choice must be made to whether feed the family or feed the animals. Magda's is admirable because her ceaseless motivation did reverse the yoke of poverty. Today, Magda is gaining financial stability to feed and educate her children. The future is brighter.

CONTACT

Jody Greenlee
Executive Director
+1 859.608.7747
Jody@FreedomThroughFriendship.org

Marguerite Doyle
CFO & Middle East Director
+1 859.312.3964
Doyle@FreedomThroughFriendship.org

Finding Freedom Through Friendship
1781 Eastwood Drive
Lexington, KY 40502
finding-freedom-through-friendship.org