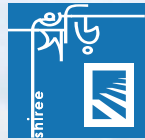


Moving Backwards: **Korail Slum Eviction**

Dhaka, April 2012



A joint
shire-DSK
Publication





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A joint **shiree**-DSK publication.
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ABBREVIATIONS

DFID	UK Department for International Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
DSK	Dushtha Shasthya Kendra
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation
RDCD	Government of Bangladesh: The Rural Development and Cooperatives Division
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
T&T	[Bangladesh] Telephone and Telegraph
BTCL	Bangladesh Telecommunication Company Limited
PWD	Public Works Department
ASK	Ain o Salish Kendra
BLAST	Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust
RAB	Rapid Action Battalion
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CUP	Coalition of the Urban Poor
RAJUK	Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha [Capital Development Authority of Bangladesh]
BHH	Beneficiary Household
IGA	Income Generating Activity
BDT	Currency: Bangladeshi Taka
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Shiree – a joint DFID and Government of Bangladesh Livelihoods programme – funds a national NGO partner Dushtha Shasthya Kendra (DSK) to work with extreme poor families in Korail slum area. The project aims to economically empower beneficiaries by transferring assets and providing tailored training, guidance and skills training, as well as access to WATSAN and health facilities, and stipends for those most vulnerable. The Rural Development and Cooperatives Division (RDCD) of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives is the parent ministry of the shiree programme.

Whilst the removal of residents from slum areas has taken place across urban areas of Bangladesh in the past, the evictions that occurred in Korail slum in Dhaka on 4th April 2012 came after a High Court Order [W.P. No. 9763/2008, 2008] which declared a stay on this particular eviction. Previous orders specified that eviction must not occur without rehabilitation [W.P. No. 3034/1999, p.18, 1999], [W.P. No. 59/1994, p.15-16, 2000].

On the 4th of April 2012, bulldozers were brought in to demolish settlements deemed illegal and destroyed the homes, livelihoods and social networks of around 2000 families (DSK, 2012), [W.P. No. 3813/2012, 2012]. The impact on the people who inhabit the Korail slums has been severe and has had long-lasting consequences. Families who lost possessions and assets were left in a state of destitution with no shelter and extremely restricted access to essential services. In the aftermath, families have been divided and children's education, as well as people's livelihoods, have been curtailed or disrupted. There have not been any attempts to rehabilitate the families affected and no compensation has been given for the assets and homes destroyed.

In this incident, other government bodies including Bangladesh Telecommunications Limited, the Ministry of Housing and Public Works and the District Magistrate took action to demolish a section of the slum, resulting in the destruction of the homes and assets provided by this RDCD/UKAid project. Over 700 shiree beneficiary households were directly affected. Thus, the progress made in the economic empowerment of the extreme poor, a government sponsored programme, has suffered a significant set back.

This report has been informed by first-hand observations and extensive interviews in the days following the evictions with 20 affected slum residents and DSK field and management staff. It paints a picture of the impact the eviction has had on the people who live in Korail. It also presents detailed analyses of the economic and social impact of the eviction and makes clear that slum evictions should not happen without rehabilitation.

*This report follows a 2011 **shiree** working paper: *Eviction and the Challenges of Protecting the Gains: A Case Study of Slum Dwellers in Dhaka city*. Available online from the DFID Research 4 Development (R4D) portal: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/r4d/PDF/Outputs/EOP/Shiree-WP3.pdf>*

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are short-term recommendations – which are immediately actionable, targeted and aim to deliver tangible change:

- 1. In line with previous High Court Orders of 2008, 2000 and 1999 eviction must not happen without rehabilitation**
- 2. Departments and agencies of the Government of Bangladesh must implement all existing domestic and international laws relating to the eviction of slum dwellers**
- 3. Evicting parties must give adequate warning of eviction. All those who might be affected should be properly informed of the proposed date of eviction and the identity of the evicting party. Official warnings and explanations should be effectively communicated - verbally, in writing, repeatedly and delivered to all**
- 4. Civil society and local government must be more coordinated in their response to eviction events. This report recommends the establishment of a common protocol for the rapid collection and dissemination of information amongst stakeholders with an interest in urban poverty. This will enable increased coordination and efficient allocation of resources in relation to rehabilitation and legal recourse**
- 5. NGOs, GoB and other stakeholders engaged in slum environments should develop and keep contingency protocols in place to deal with the immediate humanitarian need for shelter, food etc. after an eviction**
- 6. Metropolitan police departments must realize their obligations to all parties during eviction events. Legal eviction requires enforcement. However, police must always take action to protect citizens and their belongings, particularly during and after an eviction when local security often deteriorates**

The following are medium-to-long term recommendations that can help to guide policy:

- 7. When prioritising low cost housing the government must involve the extreme poor in the process and consider location in relation to employment sources and transport costs. Allocation of low-cost housing must be transparent and on a needs only basis**
- 8. The state must take responsibility for provision of all utilities services in slums to cut out middlemen who exploit the urban extreme poor**

INTRODUCTION

The Economic Empowerment of the Poorest programme (branded as shiree) is a joint GoB and UKAid programme that funds and supports the NGO Dushtha Shasthya Kendra (DSK) at Korail and Kamrangichar slums to help 10,000 families lift themselves from extreme poverty.

On 4th April 2012, widespread destruction of property and forcible eviction of residents took place. This mass eviction focused on the area surrounding Banani Lake and the Korail access road. The area affected housed 803 shiree-DSK beneficiary households, of these 778 households were directly affected by the eviction.

Shiree was made aware of the evictions as they occurred and several members of staff, including the CEO, as well as representatives from DFID, were able to witness the actual events and immediate aftermath of the removals first hand. In the days following the destruction of homes and property, interviews and a focus group were conducted with 20 beneficiaries. Additionally, interviews were conducted with DSK senior management and field staff working in Korail, and a literature review was also conducted.

The purpose of this report is to assess the impact of the 4th of April 2012 eviction upon slum dwellers from Korail slum and on shiree-DSK beneficiary households in particular.



Approximate Zone of Eviction, Korail Slum

HISTORY OF KORAIL

Korail is one of the largest slums in Bangladesh and is located under wards 19 and 20 of Dhaka City Corporation, adjacent to Gulshan-Banani Lake. The slum can be accessed by several roads or by water across Gulshan Lake. The main two units of Korail are known as Jamaibazar (unit-1) and Boubazar (unit-2). Within Boubazar, there are four sub-sections known as Ka, Kha, Ga and Gha. In addition to the main Korail slum area, Beltoli Bosti, T&T Bosti, Baidar Bosti, Ershadnagar and Godown Bosti are also part of greater Korail. The slums are gradually expanding across the lake by land reclamation and through the dumping of waste and soil.

In 1961, the area concerned was acquired by Telephone and Telegraph (T&T), now Bangladesh Telecommunication Company Limited (BTCL). As communications technology progressed use of the land by BTCL for transmission equipment became increasingly obsolete prompting a large proportion of the land (90 acres) to be formally handed over to the Public Works Department (PWD) in 1990. This was allegedly in violation of a previously established agreement with former private land owners. Legal complications ensued and eventually BTCL reclaimed the 90 acres of land from PWD. Thus three parties have become stakeholders in the disputed ownership of Korail area: BTCL, PWD and the former private landowners (Working Paper, ICDDR, 2009).

In the early 1990's, as a result of the unresolved issue of ownership, various T&T affiliates, local mastaans ('strong men') and influential elites from different political parties unofficially captured sections of the uninhabited land. Occupiers went on to informally rent out the land and housing to impoverished city dwellers at low rates. With increasing urbanization and evictions in other parts of Dhaka city (such as Agargaon) the demand for low-cost housing increased. Under these pressures the number of inhabitants and expanse of slum housing at Korail grew to create the slum as it is today.

More than 20,000 families now reside in Korail, comprising a significant element of Dhaka's work force in the garment, transportation, construction, land development, domestic help, waste management, small industry and informal sectors. Despite their significant contribution to the economy slum dwellers from Korail and elsewhere remain excluded from basic services principally because slums are considered to be "illegal settlements".

RECENT EVICTIONS – LEGAL TENURE AND PROCESSES

Tenure rights are highly insecure for Korail slum dwellers. On several occasions, residents have faced evictions by various departments and law enforcement agencies. In 1999 two legal aid organisations ASK (Ain o Salish Kendra) and BLAST (Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust) voluntarily rallied together to file a writ petition from which a High Court Order was issued. The Order stipulated that although the eviction was legal due to the land belonging to the government, it contradicted Article 15 of the Bangladesh Constitution concerning obligations in

the provision of the basic necessities of life, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care. The High Court Order directed that evictions could not happen without rehabilitation. On the 2nd of August 2003, the High Court provided an injunction against any eviction attempt, providing a level of tenure security for Korail slum dwellers.

Nonetheless, a spate of evictions began in September 20th, 2011 initially affecting 200 households, of which three households were DSK-shiree beneficiaries. The slum dwellers resisted the eviction with support from political actors, NGOs, development partners, civil society and the media. However, on January 17th, 2012, the High Court issued another injunction to protect Banani Lake from developing slums. A participatory process followed to remove existing slum houses, mainly from the lakeside where there is an intention to develop a footpath. Between January and March 2012, approximately, 2000 houses were removed from around the lake, mostly from the east and south of Korail.

In contrast to this managed process, the evictions that took place on 4th April 2012 were sudden, unexpected and violent, leaving residents inadequate time to mount a legal challenge or take practical steps to preserve their property and livelihoods. The following timeline of events has been compiled from interviews with slum residents.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS: 3RD-5TH APRIL 2012

03/04/2012 4:30pm:

A cycle van with an attached microphone passed through Korail slum announcing the demolition of a particular area. There were mixed reactions from those who heard the announcement: some did not react believing this was another warning that would not follow through, some beneficiaries sought clarification from announcers as to whether the warning was true. Announcers only repeated the warning, saying that they did not know anything more. Many people claim not to have heard the announcement as they were at work. Some shop-owners in Korail reported receiving a piece of paper which stated that an area 10 feet either side of the road would be evicted and demolished. The warning encouraged shop owners to remove their possessions. However, the warning bore no signature or indication of who might have ordered the eviction. Regardless, all the shop owners that received warning obliged and removed assets and valuables from their shops to their homes, which lay outside the designated area that was to be demolished. Most were confident that their belongings were secure.

Beneficiaries reported that in the 20 years people have been living in Korail, eviction warnings have been frequent but action has rarely followed. For this reason many beneficiaries did not take the warning seriously. Beneficiaries stated they knew the lakeside area was ultimately going to be evicted but they believed that in the event an eviction finally occurred it would be

well managed and they would receive adequate time to prepare. None of the residents interviewed imagined that it would happen in the manner that it did.

04/04/2012 10:00am:

4 bulldozers arrived on site accompanied by members of the police, RAB (Rapid Action Battalion) and men wearing red bandanas, reportedly hired to “keep the peace”. Beneficiaries reported that the workers identified with red bandanas were tasked with keeping residents away from the bulldozers and that they demonstrated intimidating and threatening behavior if residents challenged the eviction. Within the first 20 minutes, the eviction team had cleared 10 feet on either side of the designated road. Residents watched in horror as bulldozers continued further into the slum, beyond the 10 ft area cited in the warnings.

Beneficiaries reported that there was an atmosphere of complete chaos – people running and screaming, hurrying to salvage things, looking for family members and trying to move away from the oncoming bulldozers. Some residents, newly migrated from rural villages had never seen a bulldozer – many panicked whilst others reportedly fainted.

Residents reported that if they tried to protest or stop the bulldozers they were moved away with threatening gestures, yelled and sworn at by the hired guards. Police officers mandated to keep order and law and were not receptive to residents’ concerns. When residents attempted to stand in front of the bulldozers police swiftly moved them away and threatened arrest. The bulldozers went on to demolish the slum area around T&T, Ershadnagar, Baidar Bostee, Beltola, Jheelpar and other adjacent areas.

04/04/2012 2:30pm:

The demolition was complete. Police and the unidentified men with red bandanas stood at the site until 5pm. Many residents quickly returned to the sites of their homes to salvage belongings and assets. However, most items had been destroyed beyond repair. That night those whose homes were broken spent the night out in the open, either in an adjacent playing field or in the site of their demolished homes.

05/04/2012:

Agitated evictees attempted to blockade nearby roads and protest the eviction.

LEGAL ISSUES AND CONSEQUENCES

There is confusion over who ordered the eviction; those who carried out the eviction claimed they were authorised by the Court. However, without rehabilitation, the eviction of inhabitants from Korail is illegal under the original High Court Order. On 6th April ASK and BLAST filed a petition on behalf of the inhabitants of Korail. The petition contained 11 claimants including:

ASK, BLAST, BRAC, the Coalition of the Urban Poor (CUP), Dushtha Shasthya Kendra (DSK), Nijera Kori and 5 inhabitants of Korail. The defending parties stand as: the Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, the Secretary of the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication, BTCL, Mohakhali Sub-Divisional Public Works, the Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, the Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, the Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate, and the Officer in Charge of Gulshan Police Station.

The petition [W.P. No. 3814/2012, 2012] was submitted on the 10th April. The first court hearing took place on 2nd May. In the hearing it was ordered that any further eviction be postponed and ruled that the eviction was only legal on the encroached areas inside the lake. A second hearing took place on the 14th May and it was further stated that all eviction drives would be stopped. The BTCL was ordered to prepare a map of Gulshan Lake in order to demarcate what land had been encroached and how many households were living there.

RAJUK's and BTCL's lawyer presented their findings after demarcating the Lake area, and confirmed that the Korail slum does not fall within this area. On the 5th June 2012 the Court authorised BTCL to carry out evictions of any encroachments within the Lake area but to give prior notice to ASK and BLAST and ensure that their representatives are present when any such measures are taken.

DSK-SHIREE INTERVENTIONS TO DATE

DSK has been working in Korail since the early 1990s and under the shiree sub-project since 2010 undertaking a number of interventions to enable extreme poor household to pull themselves out of poverty. As of August 2012 the number of DSK-shiree beneficiaries in Korail was 6500 with livelihood support typically involving the establishment of micro businesses through the transfer of assets, as well as training and group mobilization.

ASSESSING IMPACT: SHELTER

As a direct result of the evictions almost all of the beneficiaries were forced to sleep outside as they had nowhere to go for immediate shelter. Most of them stayed on the ruined sites of their homes or slept in nearby playing fields. Unfortunately the eviction was followed by many days of rain. The evicted beneficiaries, having nowhere to go, resorted to taking shelter under pieces of plastic or paper they had gathered. One managed to purchase a piece of tarpaulin for BDT 630 after the first night which she later turned into a makeshift home.

Where beneficiaries have lost both a home and a business site the outlook is far worse. Some evictees were offered a place to stay by friends or family who lived elsewhere in Korail.

However given the pressure this puts on host families it is unlikely that this support will continue to be extended for long. One respondent, Halim, and his family of 4 were able to stay at his brother's house from the first night after the eviction. His brother already has a 3-member family which means there are now seven people living together in one room, an impractical and unhealthy solution for the long term.

In the aftermath of the eviction broken down homes and businesses remained central to resilience. Within a few days many respondents attempted to rebuild what was lost. This took the form of hastily constructed temporary shacks made from bamboo and tin, or sheets of tarpaulin. Although some had been fortunate enough to salvage construction materials and used them to rebuild, others were not so lucky. Some interviewees reported that their landlords prevented them from salvaging materials as they wanted to sell them or use them for their own purposes. There were, however also instances where landlords allowed victims to use the old tin to rebuild homes. As most beneficiaries have remained on site and many have salvaged materials there is a sense that people are rebuilding residence for the medium to long term. However given the uncertain future of Korail, is it likely that they will continue to face the threat of eviction.

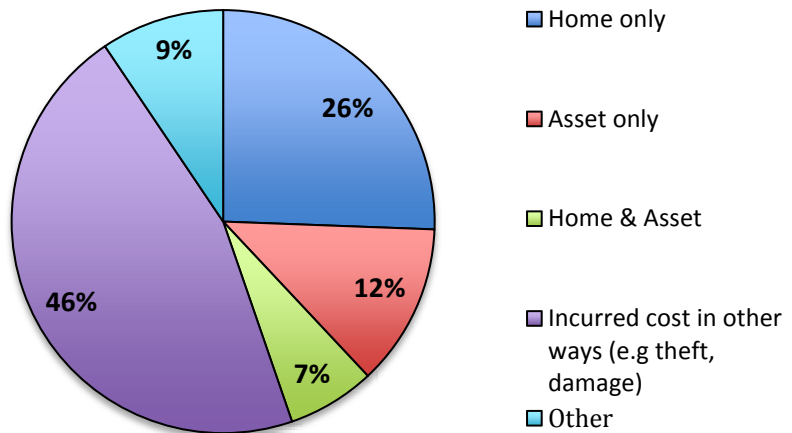
Halim received BDT 15,000 from the DSK-shiree project with which he purchased a shop site, welding machine and knife sharpener. Halim was beginning to turn a profit making and sharpening knives. With a monthly income of BDT 6000 Halim the family was thriving with additional support from his wife who worked as a housemaid earning around BDT 2000 per month. However, with the cost of renting a home (BDT 1500) and sending a small remittance to the family's home village the family rarely had money left at the end of each month.



On the 3rd of April Halim heard rumours of an eviction but no official warning. He wasn't concerned. Rumours were common and Halim drew security from the knowledge that any eviction would take days not hours. He was wrong. During the eviction of the 4th April Halim's home and business were destroyed in a matter of minutes along with BDT 5000 assets. His welding machine was heavily damaged; Halim is not sure when he will be able to pay for the repairs required as he is worried to take on new work out of fear of further evictions. After the eviction, Halim has been staying at his younger brother's house but it has been hard, two families making up seven people living in a small room. Since the eviction the family has relied on the small security of income from Halim's wife. However, they can no longer afford to keep the family together – Halim has removed their youngest child from school and sent her to live with relatives in the family village. Halim has not worked since the eviction.

Breakdown of BHH losses

Of the **803** BHHs affected by the eviction, **46%** of them lost their homes – that equates to nearly **400** families left homeless from the eviction.



ASSESSING IMPACT: LIVELIHOODS

During the eviction, businesses and livelihoods were lost in addition to houses. Of the 803 shiree beneficiaries affected, relatively few were able to save their possessions from the wreckage. There was also a high incidence of opportunistic crime; salvaged items were often stolen when the beneficiaries went back inside in an attempt to save more. Despite this some beneficiaries have been able to restart their business.

Gauri for example had been given space and equipment worth 14,000 taka to set up a hair-cutting salon. She was able to salvage some scissors and a table and her husband is now continuing their barbershop in the open air. Similarly Azimon was able to save two of her sewing machines, and is starting to take new orders despite not having a shop in which to make clothes. Gauri and Azimon livelihoods were more resilient than others; their businesses mostly rested on skills rather than material assets.

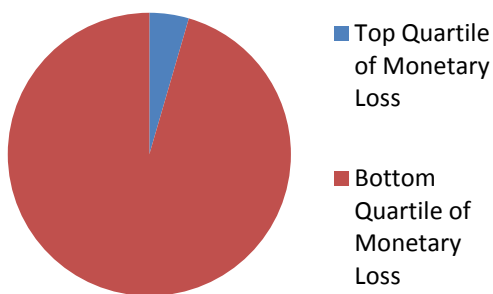
Proportion of Beneficiaries in Top vs Bottom Quartiles of Monetary Loss Categorised According to Livelihood 'Mobility'

Livelihoods were categorised into two categories: 'mobile' and 'static'. For example, mobile livelihoods include itinerant clothes sellers, rickshaw pullers and tea sellers. Static livelihoods include shop keeping, furniture businesses and small restaurants.

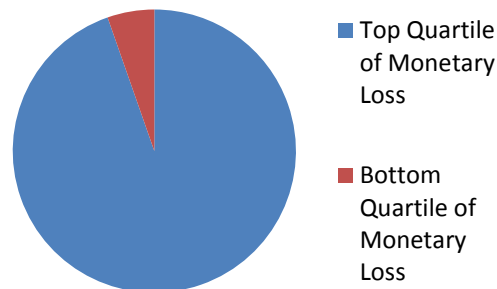
Those BHH engaged in a static livelihood invested the majority of their transfer into fixed assets in one location. During the eviction event their assets were highly vulnerable. Those engaged in a mobile livelihood invested in smaller amounts of moveable stock which meant they were at a less at risk during the eviction in terms of asset (financial) loss.

The following pie charts indicate that those with static IGAs feature far more within the top quartile of monetary loss.

Mobile IGAs



Static IGAs



Azimon lived in a small room with her husband, son and daughter. They paid BDT 1200 for rent every month. With her DSK grant she was running a tailoring business; BDT 6000 of which she spent on a sewing machine and the rest on cloth. Azimon would buy cloth, take orders and make garments like salwar kameezes and blouses. Her business was going well and generating up to BDT 4500 every month. She never received any formal warning about the eviction and unlike others, was completely unaware of the impending event. Azimon stated she didn't even hear rumours or the microphone announcement. A bulldozer demolished both her home and shop and destroyed assets worth BDT 20,000.



On the night of the eviction Azimon's family stayed on the ruined site of her home. They suffered in the rain for days afterwards with no shelter. Most of the items Azimon managed to save and bring out of her house were stolen. She has since rebuilt a shelter with leftover bamboo and spent BDT 630 to buy tarpaulin to cover it. She has sent her daughter back to their village, taking her out of school. The daughters schooling has been disrupted and she is unable to join a new school in the middle of the year. Azimon's 15 year old son is still with her and helping with some remaining tailoring work while still going to school. Fortunately Azimon did manage to salvage two of her sewing machines and is currently trying to get new orders and continue with her work in the open air. However, she is not earning enough money. "What is the point of having the sewing machines if I don't have a place of my own?" she says.



Gauri lived with her son and husband Krishna. She used the DSK grant to start a hair-cutting saloon. The money was spent on renting a space and hair cutting equipment. They started their business only a month prior to the eviction but had already made BDT 4500. The eviction has pushed them back into a desperate situation with both their home and shop being demolished. Krishna lost a BDT 3000 advance he had paid on rent and most of their productive assets are lost. The couple claim they also did not receive formal warning. On the night of the eviction they slept atop the rubble on the site of their shop. For the first few days they stayed out in the open. The family are now renting another room in Korail for BDT 1600, which Gauri says is fortunate – since the eviction house rents have gone up significantly. The family were able to secure a low price for rent because of the good relations they have with the new landlord.

Krishna has again set up his barber business from the wreckage of his former shop; he is now making only about BDT 80 a day when there is work. They spend any money they have to hand on food and medical expenses for Gauri who has suffered jaundice since the eviction. She had to go back to her father's home in Barisal. Their son missed 12 days of school and they have not eaten a full meal since the eviction.

In the aftermath of the eviction many beneficiaries had no immediate way of earning money and few display any desire to return to their village as they do not believe they can earn money there. Beneficiaries report that although they are actively seeking work, they are unable to find anything. A few have restarted their businesses, if they were able to salvage enough to do so, others have started doing day labour work and one is working in a mess hall. As well as the businesses set up through DSK, there is evidence of evictees losing alternate livelihood options as an indirect result of the destruction. However, when asked about their plans for the future, nearly all interviewees responded that they hope to restart their business. Although this shows some level of emotional resilience, it is unclear how they will get the capital to restart.

ASSESSING IMPACT: SOCIAL NETWORKS

Social ties run deep in Korail and there is a strong sense of community; the beneficiaries of the DSK-shiree project demonstrated a strong grasp of what was happening to each other. Interviewees knew who lived where, had how many children, where they came from and if they had other relatives in the city, they knew who had received what kind of help, or whose businesses were doing well. Beneficiaries could also pinpoint those families in a more desperate situation. Even if individuals could not lend support in the form of material items or money they were often enthusiastic in their support of the families who were most severely impacted by the eviction. Many beneficiaries grew even closer over their shared trauma. Since the majority of the community faces the same situation of poverty they are rarely able to extend monetary support to those who have been evicted. Instead they visit each other often and draw mutual support from one another. One interviewee told that people around her urged her to carry on, stay strong and continue working.

Other than the principle IGAs established by DSK-shiree, some beneficiaries kept second jobs, for example work as domestic help was common. When exploring this topic the importance of employer patronage and loyalty became clear. Reactions by employers varied; those BHH who had strong relationships with their employers have been donated utensils etc. whilst, in the most extreme cases, those without have been fired when they failed to attend work during and after the eviction.

Majeda's landlord has let her use the old tin from the ruins of her home to rebuild the house where they have been staying since 5th April. Before that they had been trying to find shelter under bits of plastic and paper. She has a 2-year-old baby and a 12-year-old son and husband who is many years older than her.

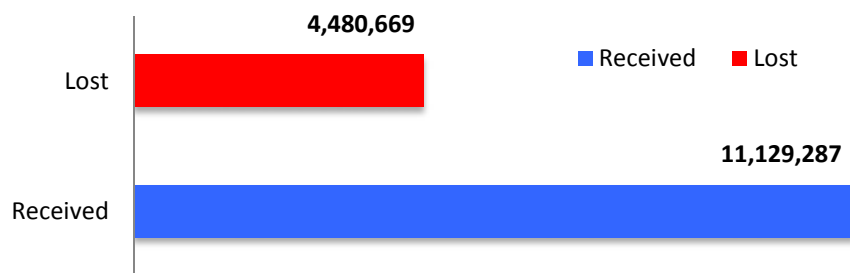
Previously Majeda was running a successful saree business with support from DSK. She made a daily profit of around 100 tk. At the same time she also worked as a maid in a home where she has been working for the last 9 years, earning tk 3500 per month, which is what the family now rely on. The eviction has caused the family huge losses; they had recently bought their house for tk 30,000. The home and all assets from her business are now lost. Anything Majeda attempted to store outside was stolen.

Majeda was under the impression that 20 ft on either side was to be cleared so didn't think she would be affected. Her son has not been back to school since the eviction and her husband, Hanif, has not been able to find any work. Majeda couldn't go back to work for a week but her employer has been kind and given her some utensils, pots and pans. Any money they have now is spent on feeding the children.



Despite reports that beneficiaries felt safe in Korail, security and trust deteriorated during and after the eviction when many homes were burgled. When residents tried to store their belongings somewhere outside their house, others would promise to watch things but stole them instead. Some actors continue to exploit the vulnerable residents of Korail, one example is the sale of drinking water. Beneficiaries allege that T&T staff have brought forward an illegal pipeline to sell water to the evictees. Desperate for water households are paying up to BDT 300 for a month's supply of water. Some newly destitute residents purchased small volumes of water for BDT 5 to 10.

DSK-shiree beneficiaries cash received vs. amount lost due to eviction (BDT) for 803 BHHs



Total Investment Lost: 40%

ASSESSING IMPACT: CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND DIVISION OF FAMILIES

One common finding amongst DSK-shiree beneficiaries was that after the eviction event younger children were often sent to live with relatives in the family's village of origin. A number of reasons for this were cited during discussion with beneficiaries. Firstly, the security of younger children was likely a factor. Post eviction the affected areas of Korail and the living conditions of families became far less secure, in some instances families prioritised the protection of young children by removing them from this environment. Secondly, younger children are consumers of resources (money, food, water) but are not easily able to economically contribute to family income. During periods of acute financial strain it may therefore be preferable to temporarily dispatch younger children to live with relatives elsewhere. Relatives who were removed from the situation likely had greater capacity to care for young children at this time.

Conversely, following the eviction event older children frequently remained with their parents on site in Korail. The destruction of assets, livelihoods and corresponding drop in income meant that older (capable) children became an important economic asset able to contribute to family income. Several of the older children amongst our sample left school to seek work. Many of the children affected are experiencing significant disruption in their education; at least one family reports that their child's school was demolished. Those children now living outside of Dhaka have arrived half way through the school year and are finding admission difficult, they are

unlikely to attend school until next year or their return to Dhaka. The impact of poor continuity in schooling is difficult to quantify but it is certain that the interruption of schooling and removal from a peer group does not make it any easier for this group of disadvantaged children.

Shilpi lives with her two daughters, one of whom is mentally disabled, and her husband. Before the eviction Shilpi was earning tk 4000-5000 from the tailoring business she had developed with the assistance of shiree. Shilpi received a sewing machine and startup capital totalling 14,000. On April the 3rd Shilpi heard warnings of an eviction but she wasn't worried; Shilpi had heard numerous warnings of eviction before, but threats were never followed through. Shilpi's home, business and her precious sewing machine were destroyed in the eviction. The family now has no source of income and sleeps beneath a tent that barely protects them. Shilpi resorted to begging for water from the TNT line and later paid 5 tk for a small volume of water. Shilpi is desperately seeking employment but has been unable to find work. Shilpi is no longer able to care for both her daughters and had to make the difficult decision of sending her youngest daughter to live with her mother in the family village. Her daughter no longer attends school. The eviction has robbed Shilpi of her livelihood, her daughter of schooling and split her family in two.



While young children were often removed from Korail, most family members stayed on site – the motivation for this is complex but appears to be a mix of factors. Firstly, many families did not have an alternative place to live; they had either lost connections with their rural home, having been Dhaka based for several generations or were not able to call on a wider social network for support. In addition, there is a sense that despite the desperate situation many beneficiaries now face, the economic opportunity of Dhaka (and around Korail in particular) is far greater than any potential site of relocation. Similarly, the social networks families have established and the provision (albeit illegal) of basic amenities such as water and electricity make Korail a preferable site compared to others.

ASSESSING IMPACT: HEALTH

The eviction event had obvious implications for the physical and mental health of beneficiaries. Even prior to the eviction, as individuals living in extreme poverty, many beneficiaries were already disproportionately prone to episodes of ill health. They were less able to access quality healthcare due to a range of barriers including poor levels of health literacy, high costs, unequal service distribution and bad service provider attitudes. The destruction of assets and break down in livelihoods has further decreased the purchasing power of these extreme poor families.

Food insecurity coupled with the destruction of local infrastructure (water points, latrines and a static clinic) and the corresponding deterioration in sanitation and health infrastructure can be expected to negatively impact health outcomes. Indeed, many beneficiaries reported episodes of illness including fever and jaundice. Some beneficiaries have acquired injuries from shifting through broken building materials. Where beneficiaries have required healthcare they speak of difficulty in meeting costs, especially at a time when the little income available is prioritised for essentials such as food and water. At the time of this study, with decreased available income, there is a risk that the inability to meet essential healthcare needs can have a permanent effect on family wellbeing.

Sokina and Dulal Mia had started a saree shop with their DSK grants. However shortly after the shop was established it was captured by more powerful neighbours. Their remaining tk 3000 was invested to set up a teashop. The shop generated around tk 2000 to 3000 a month. The couple have three boys, aged 18, 11 and 10. All three children live with their parents. The family home (which they rented for tk 2000) and the shop (which was rented for tk 1500), have both been demolished.



Sokina had heard about possible evictions but wasn't aware of the 'official' microphone announcement so never took any action. Dulal believes the family lost around tk 50,000 worth of assets from both their shop and home, including their furniture and utensils. They have now rebuilt a house with old tin from their broken home. They complain that their new house is located in a particularly hot part of the slum with no electricity. They buy water from the TNT line for tk 300. Sokina suffers from asthma and claims her condition has worsened since the eviction while Dulal Mia has been suffering with eye problems. Their 11-year-old son has been helping a neighbour to run a chotpoti cart and is earning around tk 90 per day. Their eldest son who used to give part of his income to the family has lost his job after missing too many days work and is currently unemployed. The family spent several days after the eviction with no shelter and have been eating poorly. Sokina reports that the bulk of their expenditure now goes on water and medicines.

From this study it is clear that much of the progress beneficiaries made has now been undone. Many eviction affected families have fallen back into extreme poverty. Beneficiaries spoke of their feelings of hopelessness and despair. In many cases it is difficult to envisage individuals rebuilding a livelihood without substantial financial support. Many of the families interviewed for this report have literally lost everything. Their homes and small businesses have been demolished, their assets destroyed and their families split in two. While some families were able to rely on relatives or friends for shelter others are living in the open with many sleeping beneath sheets of plastic or card.

The impact of the eviction had a profound impact on the emotional state of beneficiaries too; many report feelings of despair and depression. The mental health impact of the eviction is not investigated in this report but is likely to be significant. Several beneficiaries say they feel too depressed to find new work, though some are hopeful they will be able to restart their business in the near future. During interviews and FGDs beneficiaries sometimes became hysterical in giving a response, others cried. For many shiree beneficiaries the eviction destroyed much more than their property and livelihood.

PERPTIONS: VIEWS OF DSK

Evictions are a continual threat to the overall sustainability of the DSK-shiree intervention at Korail. During August and September of 2010, DSK had faced two evictions that occurred at Sattola slum in Mohakhali; and T&T slum, adjacent to Korail where 214 of their targeted households were affected prior to receipt of assets. Using the two evictions as examples, DSK produced a working paper titled 'Eviction and the Challenges of Protecting the Gains' which emphasizes that evictions have a "direct and negative impact on progress and gains made towards extreme poverty reduction". Though both can be deemed illegal, the nature of the two evictions were different; 2000 households were evicted from Sattola slum with no notice, while at T&T 450 households were evicted, though a private company negotiated with house owners who warned their tenants to leave and assured them that they couldn't return. This second group of inhabitants moved to other parts of the city retaining their jobs and assets. It is evident that the unplanned eviction made the Sattola slum dwellers more vulnerable while the planned eviction with warning allowed the T&T slum dwellers to continue their livelihood efforts.

The DSK working paper posited that although the material losses of these beneficiaries were limited (as they had not yet received assets), any progress on income or savings would likely be negated by the material and social losses of the eviction. The paper concluded that "large-scale evictions could hold damaging and long-term consequences to households". This prediction is becoming increasingly apparent following the April 2012 unexpected eviction at Korail where , as reported above, beneficiaries who had made great progress in terms of income and overall quality of life, have now been pushed back to situations of extreme poverty.

On the 8th of May Shiree conducted interviews with senior project staff at DSK in Dhaka. The DSK Korail Area Manager Anzumanara Begum was interviewed, as was the DSK-Shiree Project Director Dr. Tofail Md. Alamgir Azad. (note: the views reported below are those of the individual interviewees and are not necessarily endorsed by DSK or Shiree). When the DSK Korail Area Manager, Anzumanara Begum, was asked about the events at Korail she said that it was unexpected even though such actions were common in urban areas: "DSK was not informed; there was no clarity in terms of what was going to happen and when." She expressed that it was especially shocking that it happened in Korail as the slum had been in existence for around 25 years. When asked about their beneficiaries, Anzumanara stated that she felt

responsible for them and had a strong feeling of needing to do something. She stated that legal support was needed if DSK were going to continue supporting slum dwellers in Korail and elsewhere.

The long term sustainability of DSK's work will undoubtedly depend on legal support and assurance from all stakeholders that the slums or slum dwellers will be protected. When talking about what residents would do if the petition failed, Anzumanaram stated that more time was needed for them to move out if the decision to clear the land was made. Anzumanara was uncertain about the future of Korail but was positive about the role of DSK: "DSK will be there to stay!"

Dr. Azad, the DSK-Shiree Project Director, was more certain about the future of Korail – the Government will eventually reclaim it. However, he was resolute that this cannot and should not happen overnight, and predicted that when it did happen it should happen slowly. When asked about why the eviction happened in the first instance, Dr. Azad cited deep underlying political reasons. On what the government ought to do, Dr. Azad reiterated the argument that there could be no eviction without rehabilitation. DSK would strive for such an outcome, but it was the government's responsibility to ensure the basic rights and entitlements of its citizens.

An important point made by Dr. Azad was that the government and evicting parties needed to recognise the importance of slum dwellers to the local economy of Dhaka as they provide many of the city's core services. On the future of slums and illegal urban settlements Dr. Azad was of the view that flats should be built for the slum dwellers. "The government and donors should focus their efforts on shelter, as part of solution to stop forced eviction from slums again in the future. There are many development real estate companies in Bangladesh, they should build flats for slum dwellers."

GLOBAL LESSONS

The experience of evicted residents of Korail, and indeed slum dwellers in other areas of Dhaka City, are not unusual or exclusive to Bangladesh. Rural to urban migration, teamed with high population growth rates in many developing countries has led to rapid population increases. Rapid and massive urbanisation has led to "unplanned and unmanaged development, which is insufficient in terms of land, housing, services and basic infrastructure for residents" (UN HABITAT, 2011). This has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of people living in slums globally.

The decision to evict residents of Korail did not defer to the State's constitutional responsibility, specifically Article 15, to secure the basic necessities of life including shelter. The Government of Bangladesh is committed to the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of which Goal 7 aims to "achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020" (UNDP, 2012). The UN also considers forced evictions to violate a number of human rights

abuses, including the right to adequate housing. However many governments regard this as simple side effect of development or of urban renewal and justify their actions by emphasizing the “undeserving” nature of slum dwellers (UNHCR, 1996). The authorities’ hostility toward slum dwellers and their lack of land ownership often prevent their housing rights being addressed. In Korail this is apparent from the lack of legal supply of electricity and water, whilst governmental health and educational facilities are largely absent. A deadlock over settling the matter of the legal status of Korail has led to state neglect and an absence of state provision. Whilst Korail has grown, both spatially and as an important source of labour, the state’s role has diminished and it has been left to civil society groups and NGOs to fill the gaps in service provision.

In the past, resettlement plans for other slum areas in Dhaka have had mixed results. These projects intended to provide alternative shelter for the urban poor, but often the houses built did not serve the interest of the poor (including location reasonably close to income sources) and there had also been cases where more powerful individuals appropriated the land and property of such projects.

Presenting low-cost housing plans as the only long-term option ignores the alternative options of improving the lives of slum dwellers so that they can over time move themselves out of the slums or gradually raise the status of slums through individual or community driven improvement schemes based on a principal of security of tenure. With rising inequality the role of the state must be strengthened and not simply be relegated to actions of building and dismantling. “In facing the challenge of slums, urban development policies should more vigorously address the issue of livelihoods of slum dwellers... thus going beyond traditional approaches that have tended to concentrate on improvement of housing, infrastructure and physical environmental conditions.” (UNDP).

The action to evict and demolish homes in Korail contradicts both national and international agreements to which Bangladesh is signatory. It is also symptomatic of a lack of joined-up thinking from a policy perspective, where key stakeholders continue to view slums and their inhabitants as spatial anomalies.

CONCLUSION

Slum dwellers are some of the most vulnerable people in Bangladesh. Many have moved to the slums in search of a better life, while others have grown up there and have established valuable social and economic networks. These communities are essential to running the industries which allow the country to prosper, and to maintaining the homes of the richer classes. Evictions such as those in Korail on the 4th of April may take only a few hours to implement, but the repercussions for thousands of people will continue for generations. An unplanned mass eviction implemented through overwhelming use of force (bulldozers, police and guards) with minimal warning is in many ways like a natural disaster such as a cyclone. It causes havoc, fear and mass destruction of property, it divides families, destroys the means for survival, crushes hope and pushes people who were moving upwards back down towards the bottom. Perhaps a significant difference is that whereas a cyclone affects the entire population of a region, a mass eviction is less visible or newsworthy and the victims are almost exclusively those with the least social, economic and political resources to rebuild their lives or to appeal for relief.

The Korail eviction has brought into focus the need for a coherent urban poverty and resettlement solution. Previously proposed options such as the Bhashantek low-cost housing scheme have failed because the equitable and fair distribution of flats based on need has not been achieved. Other proposals such as those to construct resettlement projects in the suburbs disregard the fact that the urban poor are the base of the pyramid, supporting every strata of the urban economy and that physical proximity is a critical condition for many of the economic activities undertaken (from housemaids to security guards or rickshaw drivers).

A change in policy must begin with a change in attitude and understanding. Society as a whole, and particularly those with the power to make changes, must recognise the contribution the urban poor make and respect the rights of the powerless. A feasible policy alternative is to focus efforts on nurturing the livelihoods of the urban poor, providing slum dwellers with access to essential services and the foundation of skills, assets and rights that is necessary to enable families to engineer their own exit from extreme poverty and the slum environment. At the very least the gains that have been made by programmes like shiree, in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh, should be protected from the perverse consequences of detrimental actions by other Government-allied sectors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are short-term recommendations – which are immediately actionable, targeted and aim to deliver tangible change:

- 1. In line with previous High Court Orders of 2008, 2000 and 1999 eviction must not happen without rehabilitation**
- 2. Departments and agencies of the Government of Bangladesh must implement all existing domestic and international laws relating to the eviction of slum dwellers**
- 3. Evicting parties must give adequate warning of eviction. All those who might be affected should be properly informed of the proposed date of eviction and the identity of the evicting party. Official warnings and explanations should be effectively communicated - verbally, in writing, repeatedly and delivered to all**
- 4. Civil society and local government must be more coordinated in their response to eviction events. This report recommends the establishment of a common protocol for the rapid collection and dissemination of information amongst stakeholders with an interest in urban poverty. This will enable increased coordination and efficient allocation of resources in relation to rehabilitation and legal recourse**
- 5. NGOs, GoB and other stakeholders engaged in slum environments should develop and keep contingency protocols in place to deal with the immediate humanitarian need for shelter, food etc. after an eviction**
- 6. Metropolitan police departments must realize their obligations to all parties during eviction events. Legal eviction requires enforcement. However, police must always take action to protect citizens and their belongings, particularly during and after an eviction when local security often deteriorates**

The following are medium-to-long term recommendations that can help to guide policy:

- 7. When prioritising low cost housing the government must involve the extreme poor in the process and consider location in relation to employment sources and transport costs. Allocation of low-cost housing must be transparent and on a needs only basis**
- 8. The state must take responsibility for provision of all utilities services in slums to cut out middlemen who exploit the urban extreme poor**

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