



Extreme Poverty and Protecting the Gains - Lessons from Recent Research

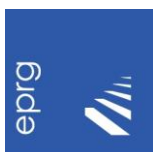
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Extreme Poverty Research Group (EPRG)

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The Extreme Poverty Research Group (EPRG) develops and disseminates knowledge about the nature of extreme poverty and the effectiveness of measures to address it. It initiates and oversees research and brings together a mix of thinkers and practitioners to actively feed knowledge into practice through interventions taking place in real time. It is an evolving forum for the shiree family to both design and share research findings.

The data used in this publication comes from the Economic Empowerment of the Poorest Programme (www.shiree.org), an initiative established by the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) to help 1 million people lift themselves out of extreme poverty. The views expressed here are entirely those of the author(s).

Extreme Poverty and Protecting the Gains - Lessons from Recent Research

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper discusses the lessons from a series of research projects themed around extreme poverty and 'protecting the gains'. The Shiree/Economic Empowerment of the Poorest (EEP) project is a Department for International Development (DFID)/UKAID and Government of Bangladesh (GoB)-supported Challenge Fund, specifically designed to target the extreme poor – or those 'at the bottom of the ladder' - in Bangladesh. In its first phase of funding, Shiree supported six partner NGOs to scale-up 'proven' approaches to reducing extreme poverty through economically empowering households.

The Extreme Poverty Research Group (EPRG) develops and disseminates knowledge about the nature of extreme poverty and the effectiveness of measures to address it. It initiates and oversees research, acts as a learning and sharing mechanism, and assists in the translation of learning into advocacy. Research topics are identified through the practical experience of working with extreme poor households across shiree's portfolio of projects. Throughout the implementation of these projects, various lessons emerged, as well as one overriding issue, notably, the need to ensure or maximize the possibility for sustainable impacts to households, or to 'protect the gains'.

In response to these experiences, a series of small research projects were undertaken between January and May 2011 and this chapter brings together some of the main messages from this research. There is clearly a lot to learn from not only scaling-up but also protecting the gains for the benefit of future extreme poverty programming. How can the potential of sustainability be understood and realised in practice? This outlines the key findings from the protecting the gains research projects.

Protecting the Gains

"Protecting the Gains" refers to the need to safeguard or sustain the benefits made by households in moving out of extreme poverty. In summary, it asks the question of how gains made can be both maximized and sustained in the long-term. It also recognizes that households' interactions with a project, or an individual's ability to climb out of extreme poverty, takes place in the context of, and is therefore shaped by, both intra-household dynamics (e.g. the relationship between men and women or the dependence of a household on the work of its children) and the wider social, economic and political context in which households live (e.g. regions marked by high social conflict, by ecological fragility and repeat disasters).

Throughout the paper, the topics and lessons which have emerged in the research are discussed according to various themes. The findings highlight that extreme

poverty programming requires both an appreciation of the social, economic, political and cultural contexts in which households live, and a long-term perspective – to build in – as much as possible, strategies which build resilience to present and future risks. Some findings include:

- The importance of **raising knowledge of threats** (such as viruses in shrimp cultivation) and increasing beneficiaries' confidence to take steps to mitigate risks and make sizeable investments.
- The strong need for more **ex-ante or preventative approaches to shock and disaster**, demonstrated by the case of Save the Children UK (SCUK), in the South-West of Bangladesh.
- Lessons from Care have highlighted the critical role of **empowering key change makers** in communities to become advocates for the extreme poor, who have gone on to directly engage with local Governments for improved resource allocation and transparency.
- Learning from PAB shows the importance of considering the potential of produce to **flood local markets** (i.e. when the focus of an intervention rests on the production of one to two crops). This can reduce the prices at which goods are sold, and undermine the overall potential gains.
- Research by NETZ explored the reasons behind **Adivasis' (ethnic minorities) scarce access to social protection** mechanisms. Contributing to this is a severe lack of information, with adivasis being found to rarely receive information on SSNs disseminated by the state system. In addition, non-Adivasis were found to be reluctant to pass accurate information to Adivasis. A low literacy rate among Adivasis also contributes to this problem. Where Adivasis were found to have accessed SSNs, their receipt of these was closely linked to their relationships or loyalties to influential employers or political elites.
- **Adivasi political exclusion:** The weak participation of Adivasis has been identified as a key barrier in their access to SSNs.
- DSK research into the August 2010 eviction at Sattola slum confirmed that **eviction has a devastating impact on the lives and livelihoods of the extreme poor**. Gains were lost to income levels, health, hygiene, food, accommodation and education. Comparing the eviction with that in T&T at the same time has shown that being given warning before an eviction takes place can significantly minimize the damage and loss to livelihoods. Eviction should be well planned along with concrete rehabilitation and

compensation options. Immediate support needs to be provided to the evictees.

- Emerging evidence reveals that there is the need to pay attention **to the role of children and youths in moving households on the road to graduation**. Their position needs to be fostered to promote positive change, limiting the transmission of extreme poverty to the next generation.

The paper also highlights the **gendered nature of extreme poverty**, and the implications that this has for working effectively and creatively with extreme poor men, women, boys and girls. For example:

- Female-headed households (FHHs), whose social and economic bargaining power is low, are reported to face significant and continued difficulties in accessing markets, inputs for production, and in trying to receive fair prices for their produce.
- Furthermore, there is seen to be scope to strengthen the position of women in male-headed households (MHHs) – by building their skills and interests for greater gender equality, whilst at the same time, not increasing the heavy burdens that women already face in extreme poor households (particularly in times of disaster).

Overall, the paper highlights that socio-economic contexts hold implications, for creating both enabling and constraining spaces, in which extreme poor households try to improve their livelihoods. In other words, it makes the effort to understand the sociology in which projects are operating, or to see households involving individuals (or actors with varying degrees of agency) negotiating complex spaces (made of different institutions and structures). Not only highlighting a variety of issues as key challenges in projects' efforts to eradicate extreme poverty, the findings offer key recommendations for operational consideration and a variety of advocacy messages relevant to stakeholders in the wider policy space. The paper finishes with a summary of these. It also touches on what has been learnt throughout the research process, and makes some suggestions for the future research framework and activities of the EPRG. It makes a summary of the research questions coming from this phase – these revolve around land, governance, gender, children, and responding to disaster and climate change. Annex 1 also documents the main lessons identified by Scale Fund NGOs during the scale-up of models.

Click [here](#) to read the full working papers from the protecting the gains research projects.

ACRONYMS

APPG – All Party Parliamentary Group on Extreme Poverty

BHH – Beneficiary Household

CMS - Change Monitoring System

DFID / UKAID – Department for International Development

DRR - Disaster Risk Reduction

DSK - Dushtha Shasthya Kendra

EEP – Economic Empowerment of the Poorest

EPRG - Extreme Poverty Research Group

FFH – Female Headed Household

GoB – Government of Bangladesh

HEFS - Household Economic and Food Security

HH - Household

IAP – Independent Assessment Panel

IGA – Income Generating Activity

MA – Management Agency

MHH – Male Headed Households

SETU – Social and Economic Transformation of the Ultra-Poor

SSN – Social Safety Net

PAB – Practical Action Bangladesh

PUCs - Para Unnayan Committees

SEMPTI – Simultaneous Integrated Approach to Transferring Khas Land, Skills and Assets

UP - Union Parishad

Q2 – Quantitative and Qualitative

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Shiree/Economic Empowerment of the Poorest (EEP) project is a Department for International Development (DFID)/UKAID and Government of Bangladesh (GoB)-supported Challenge Fund specifically working with the extreme poor – or those 'at the bottom of the ladder' - in Bangladesh. It currently funds 36 different projects (through 33 NGOs), the portfolio of which is diverse: targeting a variety of vulnerable populations (e.g. Female Headed-Households (FHHs), street children, the elderly and physically challenged), in distinct pockets of extreme poverty across the country (e.g. in Barisal (in the South-West), Rangpur (in the North-West), the *haors* (large areas of flood-prone river basin the North-East) the urban slums and streets of Dhaka, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts).

Project activities are also diverse. All projects focus on providing a source for income generation at the household-level (for economic empowerment) working through a range of Income Generating Activities (IGAs) such as livestock rearing, tailoring and small business creation (e.g. grocery shops and tea stalls). In addition, many of the projects work on a group-level to encourage saving, increase confidence and raise awareness of specific issues (e.g. dowry or low agricultural wage rates). At the same time, many projects are working with local Government offices to increase access to Government-provided social safety nets (SSNs) and promoting linkages with the private sector and local markets to improve the marketing and profitability of IGAs.¹ Some partners are also providing health and WATSAN supports as integrated components of the interventions.

The Shiree Management Agency (MA) provides implementation support and facilitates lesson learning during the life of projects, encouraging the subsequent up-take of useful learning across the portfolio.² The Extreme Poverty Research Groups (EPRG) was developed in partnership between shiree and partner NGOs. Its purpose is to develop and disseminate knowledge about the nature of extreme poverty and the effectiveness of measures to address it. It initiates and oversees research, acts as a learning and sharing mechanism, and assists in the translation of learning into advocacy. Research topics are identified through the practical experience of working with the extreme poor, with the benefit of shiree research being that findings have the opportunity to improve interventions in real time. Throughout 2011, the group has met quarterly, and continues to act as an evolving forum for the shiree family to both design and share research findings.

¹ Visit the shiree website (www.shiree.org) to read more about individual NGOs and projects.

² This is facilitated through the Change Monitoring System (CMS), with lessons shared in various forums such as Lesson Learning Workshops, the EPRG, and the APPG. Visit the innovative Extreme Poverty Monitor here: <http://www.shiree.org/content/cms-overview>

In short, there is a growing recognition of the need to learn about the dynamics of extreme poverty (what causes people to fall into and / or remain in extreme poverty); but also, about what types of operational responses are effective in lifting this “left-behind” population (from the country’s economic growth, civil society activities and government social protection programmes) sustainably out of extreme poverty. Furthermore, there is the need to prioritise the advocacy messages to channel in the direction of key change makers (including NGOs, donors and the Government) to stimulate a change in attitude towards the extreme poor, and an increase in the volume and quality of resources allocated towards this group.

In 2009, Scale-Fund projects were competitively selected³ on the basis that they can replicate ‘proven’ approaches to reducing extreme poverty on a much larger scale. In contrast, the Innovation-Fund finances new, innovative and experimental smaller-scale projects. Clearly there is significant opportunity for cross-learning between the Scale- and Innovation-Fund projects and for the refinement of approaches on the basis of such learning.

While implementing the Scale-Fund projects, a variety of lessons have emerged, particularly in the identification and targeting of the extreme poor. At the same time, it became obvious that there was a strong need to ensure or maximize the potential for sustaining the impacts made by households, or to ‘protect the gains’. This led to more thinking on what creative sustainability strategies might look like in practice⁴, and to the decision to theme Scale-Fund Round 2 and Innovation-Fund Round 4 around the sustainability and graduation issue.

Social scientists have long debated the relative weight of the importance of structure and agency in shaping human interaction. Exploring how households and projects try to “protect the gains” highlights the variety of negotiations which take place in complex spaces or contexts full of differing enabling and constraining forces. This chapter outlines the key lessons identified throughout the protecting the gains research projects.

2. RESEARCH PROCESS AND PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

Six research projects were undertaken across the Scale-Fund projects between January and May 2011. Each research topic was identified through a consultative process between NGO researchers, project staff, management and Bath University. All of the research findings so far have been shared with NGO partners and project

³ Projects are selected through an Independent Assessment Panel (IAP).

⁴ This shiree discussion paper outlines a variety of potential sustainability strategies:
http://www.shiree.org/sites/default/files/Achieving%20Sustainable%20Impact%20-%20Discussion%20Paper_4.pdf

staff, the EPRG and the shiree team.⁵ This paper discusses the key lessons and messages emerging from the protecting the gains research packages. Annex 1 documents the lessons identified by Scale-Fund NGOs when scaling up their project models in terms of their main successes and challenges experienced.

3. “PROTECTING THE GAINS”?

“Protecting the Gains” refers to the need to safeguard or sustain the benefits which households have made in moving out of extreme poverty. In summary, it asks the question of how gains made by households can be both maximized and sustained in the long-term. It also recognizes that households’ interactions with a project, or an individual’s ability to climb out of extreme poverty, takes place in the context of, and is therefore shaped by, both intra-household dynamics (e.g. the relationship between men and women or the dependence of a household on the work of its children) and the wider social, economic and political situations in which households live (e.g. regions marked by high social conflict, by ecological fragility and repeat disasters).

In this sense, the insights of social scientists bear relevance. There is a long-standing debate over the relative weight of importance of structures in society (various institutions and dominant and prevailing social norms) over human agency and behaviour (the ability of individuals and groups to make meaningful choices and act on them). Theorists who favor the former (e.g. Marx and Durkheim) drew attention to the importance of macro structures (such as class, labour markets or religion), while in contrast, micro-sociologists (such as Goffman or Long) instead highlighted significant agency at the micro level. Trying to balance or bridge the gap between these theories, structuration theorists (e.g. Giddens) argued that human interactions and societal change are shaped by both.

The “protecting the gains” research projects tried to explore and understand how households negotiate complex spaces and contexts in the face of enabling and constraining forces. Recent thinking on empowerment has drawn attention to the different degrees or abilities that poor have to negotiate with the “rules of the game” (DFID, 2010). In the context of extreme poverty, when constraints and deprivations are so multiple - as increased work around the multidimensionality of poverty is arguing (e.g. Alkire, 2011) - in what ways are households trying to protect their gains, and in the case of shiree, with the assistance of extreme poverty focused interventions?

⁵ Shiree research fosters a Q2 approach –triangulating quantitative and qualitative data – and as such, what is presented here draws on a wide range of material including project documents and / or discussions, observations, CMS data, and additional research.

TABLE 1: PROTECTING THE GAIN RESEARCH PACKAGES (JAN-MAY 2011)

Care	<i>Better targeting of extremely poor in government's safety net programs through participatory pro-poor governance – A Learning Point</i>
DSK	<i>Eviction and the challenges of protecting the gains: A case study of slum dwellers in Dhaka city</i>
Netz	<i>Assessing the Access to Safety Net support of the Extreme Poor Adivasis under AMADER project</i>
PAB	<i>Politics of accessing and retaining access to the sandbars by the extreme poor</i>
SCUK	<i>Vulnerabilities and resilience to disaster of extreme Poor households</i>
Uttaran	<i>Making Productive Use of Khas Land: Experiences of the Extreme Poor Households</i>

SO WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT ABOUT EXTREME POVERTY AND PROTECTING THE GAINS?

Shiree is currently moving into a second phase of Scale-Fund Round 1 projects and contracting projects under Scale-Found Round 2 and Innovation Round 4. In this context, what are the major experiences and lessons worth sharing? The remaining section of the paper outlines the key findings and messages from the Phase 1 research packages.

3.1 INCOME GENERATION, ASSETS, AND RISK TAKING

“Gambling attitude” of unsuccessful farmers: Uttaran found that contributing to unsuccessful shrimp production was the practice of farmers “trying their luck” and not investing in feeding and caring of water bodies. This was largely due to a fear of

virus attack and a knock-on production loss. A tentative conclusion to be drawn here is that greater attention to knowledge and confidence building might help such households feel more comfortable to invest in practices likely to bring longer-term gains.

Concept of virus: Again in Uttaran's case, among both unsuccessful and successful farmers (male-headed and female-headed), the concept of 'virus' is vague, threatening and associated with fate. Little is really known about why viruses attack and what measures can be taken to prevent them. This was found to be particularly the case for FHHs, isolated from sources of information such as extension workers and commercial farmers (at the market, for example). This led to the recommendation for improved demonstration-based training.

"No-one knows why virus attacks, it takes different forms in different farms, no-one can do anything about it, though we give medicine but nothing happens, so what's the point of using any medicine for preventing the attack...till today no farmer has been able to understand what virus is and how it can be prevented."

Uttaran SEMPTI beneficiary, 2011

3.2 LAND

Location, size and quality of land: Findings show that the location, size and quality of land can have a substantial impact on the amount of produce made as generating and protecting the gains towards achieving sustainable livelihoods, for those with low quality, under-sized and land inundated during high tides, is difficult. Moreover, those receiving less than 10 decimals of land found it difficult to use the plot for a sustainable production, with the land only really proving useful for establishing houses. Inundation during high tides and saline water make it difficult to establish stable production from land.

Importance of outside actors to production: For shrimp production, most of the households who have struggled to make successful use of their water bodies have depended (by replicating) what their neighbours are doing, and in most cases, were undertaking practices not likely to yield higher production. This suggests that if knowledge about improved practices were more widespread, greater impacts for surrounding households could also be made.

Security and length of tenure on land: For those receiving land under the Uttaran SEMPTI project (both those proving successful and unsuccessful), participants reported feeling insecure about their land for various reasons. For some BHHs, security depended on their relationships with Union Ward members, while for others; security was closely tied to the potential for land erosion in the future, with it being

located outside of an embankment. Many felt that receiving a permanent lease to land, in contrast to a temporary one, enabled a greater sense of security about the future. The limited capacity of the local administration to monitor how land is used by people, including whether it is retained by the extreme poor, also heightens the sense of insecurity experienced by BHHs. In general, the longer a household had been residing on a piece of land, the greater sense of security. Lastly, the ongoing threat that a local influential might capture one's land remains a source of significant tension and uncertainty.

"If we have any dispute with the local ward member then he might bring in new people in the area and help them occupy a portion of our land. This will reduce the size of land that we are entitled to."

Uttaran SEMPTI Beneficiary, 2011

Lack of support from the government for the use of khas land: The consensus from interviews with various UNOs shows that there is little government capacity or support mechanisms in place to provide production support to farmers who receive khas land. Further, linkages with government agencies are few and far between.

Importance of diversified income: Among successful households, all those who own land have other assets and earn an extra income. After receiving IGA support from the project, households have become involved in other small businesses or have increased their number of assets, highlighting the benefit of combining land and asset transfer and immediate and long-term gain.

Retaining shared access to land: In the first year of the PAB Pathways from Poverty project, groups of extreme poor beneficiaries negotiated with land owners for areas of the sandbars, where pumpkin and butternut squash have been cultivated, on what was previously thought to be unfertile land. This proved successful – households saw successful harvests, and were able to sell their products to make a profit, as well as keep some of their produce for their households own consumption, improving food security. However, having witnessed this success, in the second and third year of the project, landlords have become much less willing to allow access to the land: either through withdrawing the access all together, or by demanding a share of the produce or profits. This is presenting a key operational challenge to the project in terms of protecting the gains, given that any vision of accessing the land on a long-term basis is now under threat. This is pushing households to access land in locations far from their homes, having knock-on impacts to their produce, in terms of its quality and the risk of it being stolen. One conclusion is that more confidence building activities with groups needs to take place, and that the size of groups remains large to increase their bargaining power. Further to this, the local government should be

involved not only in the negotiation process (which they currently are) but also throughout the implementation of project activities.

3.3 MARKETING

Flooding of markets: Learning from PAB shows the importance of considering the potential of produce to flood local markets (i.e. when the focus of an intervention rests on the production of one to two crops). This can reduce the prices at which goods are sold for, and undermine the overall potential gains.

3.4 SOCIAL PROTECTION

Benefits of extreme poor empowerment: Care's research into the SETU community-based approach to pro-poor and inclusive governance found evidence of increased empowerment and confidence among beneficiaries. This has enabled them to challenge and influence the decisions of UPs. The approach is argued to have broadened and deepened citizens' influence in the decisions that affect their lives.

Success with “Natural Leaders” and Union Parishad involvement. The practice of establishing “Natural Leaders” in communities who network and link with Union Parishads (UPs) is reported to have enabled increased access to resources, particularly SSNs.⁶ The research showed an improved political culture through the work of Natural Leaders with UPs. For example, UPs are now actively using lists of extremely poor households prepared by Natural Leaders and PUCs. The nature of the relationships built between Natural Leaders and the UP is seen as being highly constructive, with findings showing that the Unions' revenue from tax has also increased. The project has also documented an increase in the number of elderly and physically challenged beneficiaries receiving government SSNs.

Adivasis' exclusion from information: Research by NETZ explored the reasons behind adivasis' scarce access to social protection mechanisms.⁷ Contributing to this is a

⁶ Natural Leaders are people within the working communities who demonstrate the potential and willingness to lead and support their neighbours in understanding collective actions. PUCs are formed with Natural Leaders and other community members to work for the development process of their community.

⁷ From CMS 1, out of 9380 family members (from 3000 BHHs), only 2.7% members (8.23% of households) received government SSNs during the survey period, yet 97.4% BHHs (91.77%) are not covered despite most of them being eligible. In the 2 unions studied, the number of BHHs actually eligible for safety nets is much higher than those that actually received safety nets. In Goala, 74% of households are eligible for safety nets based on the criteria of age, physical disability, female-headed households, widows and those disserted and divorced. In Shapahar, this number is 65 (roughly 66%). In reality however, only 3 received in Goala and 4 received safety nets in Shapahar (3% and 5% respectively (see Hossain, 2011: 13).

severe lack of information, with adivasis being found to rarely receive information on SSNs disseminated by the state system. This deprivation from information exists not only because Adivasis are not accustomed to modern dissemination processes, but also because the information is rarely made available in their locality. In addition, non-Adivasis were found to be reluctant to pass accurate information to Adivasis. A low literacy rate among Adivasis also contributes to this problem. Where Adivasis were found to have accessed SSNs, their receipt of these was closely linked to their relationships or loyalties to influential employers or political elites.

"Shahasya Ashley janabo, tomade rashetey hobeina". Orajanabei na, karonamader k dam deina, amder katha valobhavei soneina".

They (duty bearers) told us 'when the benefits come we will tell you. You need not to come here.' They will never tell us. They do not care about us; they do not listen to our words properly.

NETZ Beneficiary, 2011

"In our community three Adivasi got govt. help (safety net), they are better than us. The main cause is that they always go to the leader's house"

NETZ Beneficiary, 2011

Adivasi political exclusion: The weak participation of Adivasis has been identified as a key barrier in their access to SSNs. There were no Adivasi elected political ward commissioners (UP members) or (UP Chairman) in the study area.

"Leader does not listen to our word, when we went alone they never gave us any time. We need to go all together".

NETZ Beneficiary, 2011 in FGD

Cultural labeling: The heavy prevalence of cultural labeling contributes to the exclusion of adivasis. Extreme poor Adivasis were found to be excluded from SSN coverage through the use of stigmatizing labels such as "Adivasis are drunkards", "Adivasi women have no barriers to work outside, but Muslim women do, so Muslim women should get safety nets", and "they are not stable in one place because they have no owned land or homestead".

"They (leaders) told that women in Muslim community do not work, so, they are needy and deserve more supports".

NETZ Beneficiary, 2011

As such, adivasis are seen as *undeserving* of SSNs. From a livelihoods perspective extreme poor adivasis are severely deprived in social, economic and cultural

capital. The French sociologist's Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital theorized this much more in terms of a lacking in cultural power. Extreme poor Adivasis are negotiating from a different starting point, as a minority in an environment where resource allocation is largely stacked against them.

Beyond and in addition to this labeling, the researchers argue that there is a more insidious goal: that poor non-Adivasis and rich alike do not want Adivasis to gain access to the limited supply of safety nets on offer. This competition for SSNs between Adivasi and non-Adivasi intensifies the situation. Moreover, wealthy non-Adivasis fear that giving Adivasis access to SSNs would discourage them from migrating due to need, and consequently leave them less scope to capture the abandoned homestead and land left by Adivasis (this is particularly worrying as such land now has more value as a result of the homestead gardening interventions of NETZ).

"Adivasis are ignored as we escape them. We, Muslims (non-Adivasis), are not inclined to mix with the Adivasis due to their cultural orientation i. e. drinking".

NETZ Beneficiary, 2011

"Amra to Boka lak, Masulmanera dekbei na" (We, Adivasi, are fools; Muslims will not take care of us).

NETZ Beneficiary, 2011

3.5 EVICTION

Impact of eviction to livelihoods and the importance of pre-warning: DSK research into the August 2010 eviction at Sattola slum confirmed that eviction has a devastating impact on the lives and livelihoods of the extreme poor. Gains were lost to income levels, health, hygiene, food, accommodation and education. Comparing the eviction with that in T&T at the same time has shown that being given warning before an eviction takes place can significantly minimize the damage and loss to livelihoods. Eviction should be well planned along with concrete rehabilitation and compensation options. Immediate supports need to be provided to the evictees (see example).

DSK: EXAMPLE COMPENSATION PACKAGE TO EVICTED HOUSEHOLDS

A package of taka 2,000 (including food items, utensils and cash) per family was provided by DSK-shiree project as short-term response immediately after the eviction at Mohammadpur Beribadh areas during May 2011. A total of 51 evicted families were received the supports. The evicted households appreciated receiving the short-term response.

1. Rice- 20 kg
2. Pulse- 2 kg
3. Potatoes- 5 kg
4. Onion- 2 kg
5. Oil - 2 litres
6. Cooking materials
7. Cash money 500-1000 for cloth & other essential commodities

Continuing threat of eviction and impacts to gains: The threat of eviction is continuing in the DSK working area, which is creating a strong sense of insecurity among households. In trying to protect themselves, households' are reportedly now less willing to reinvest in their businesses. This is also preventing service providers and NGOs restarting work here.

Strengthen group unity, slum-based organisations and realize the responsibility of various actors: The research recommends that there can be more work done to increase the unity and confidence among slum-dwellers, as well as further strengthening slum-based organisations. In addition, greater linkages of these with service providers can be made and an organised and pro-active role from donors and UN organisations is needed. At the national level, the Government needs to be more thoroughly sensitised, as do respective agencies who are the real owner of the lands. Essentially, the High Court ruling that "Rehabilitation has to be ensured before any eviction" needs to be realised and responsibilities fulfilled. Civil society and the mass media (such as television channels, news papers) also play significant roles in favor of slum dwellers and that should be continued and strengthen.

3.6 GENDER

Learning new techniques and skills for increased production: In the case of Uttaran, FHHs (both those proving successful and unsuccessful in increasing production on land or water bodies), were found to not be keen to learn and apply skills and knowledge for higher production. Both were found to not have a clear idea about the right amounts of inputs required to generate high productivity. Most reported that they could not remember what they had been taught during the project arranged IGA orientation sessions, and that the costs of improved techniques (for

releasing fish fries, providing fish fries or techniques for maintaining ponds) were too expensive. This led to the recommendation that training sessions for staff and BHHs need to look more closely and sensitively at how women are interacting with IGAs and project support, with there being potential for improving the support available to FHHs.

Mobility, market linkages and consequences: FHHs were found to have fewer market linkages and options for purchasing inputs for production and sale of produce. For example, Uttaran found that FHHs preferred to buy Post Larvae (for shrimp production) from neighbours while MHHs households go more frequently to the nearest wholesale market. FHHs also preferred to sell harvests from their homes to middle-men who then sell on to larger traders. In addition, they struggled more to receive a fair price for their produce.

Decision making and intra-household dynamics: In Uttaran's case, so far, there is little evidence of joint decision making between men and women in households. Amongst MHHs, decisions were mainly made by men with women's role limited to assisting them. Both men and women were found to provide labour on the land and in most of the cases, husbands made most of the investment and production decisions regarding the land. This was even the case when the female in the household had knowledge of production techniques. In some cases, wives were unable to tell what their husbands had spent on inputs. This suggests the need to reduce inequality in gender relations at the household level.

Disaster and women's work loads: SCUK revealed that gender relations were particularly impacted or re-defined in times of disaster. For example, following Cyclone Aila, Sidr and the tidal surge in 2010, more women were forced to work outside their homes. Women and children are reported to have had a significant role in the recovery period following SIDR, AILA and the tidal surge in 2010 in terms of managing resources, finding additional income-generating work, and through engaging their children in work. Young girls are reported to have started migrating to towns to work in garment factories. In addition, the heavy out-migration of males after these disasters left many women alone at their homes, shouldering heavier burdens of domestic and paid work. During SIDR and AILA, women's involvement in income generation increased including fishing, road construction and earth digging. At the same time, out-migration by men led to a rise in abandonment and separation.

Credit: Most informants, in the case of Uttaran, were found to be taking credit in addition to project support to afford different inputs, mainly from relatives and acquaintances, highlighting that BHHs are pooling resources to maximize the benefit they can gain from project support. This was particularly the case for FHHs and those

affected by cyclone Aila. This holds gendered implications for reducing debts and efforts to climb out of extreme poverty.

“As we are female, we need to borrow more money. Men can get more income from outside.”

Uttaran SEMTI Beneficiary, 2011

Labour intensity of pumpkin cultivation: PAB findings raised the issue of the labour intensity of pumpkin cultivation, and the challenges this presents women who are mainly responsible for the work in their husbands' absence (during migration). This involves daily care for the vegetables through irrigation (midday and in the evening), and manual pollination in the morning, reported to be particularly labour-intensive. There is also no shade from the sun or rain when working on the sandbars. Obviously work intensity holds different health implications to men and women. During a hail storm, one woman was found crying during the research. This raises dilemmas for projects in terms of identifying IGAs and project activities which are sensitive to gender differences and women's physical capabilities to undergo heavy work.

3.7 COASTAL EXTREMELY POOR

Examining different livelihood options under coastal conditions: Findings show that SCUK livelihood interventions implemented in April 2010 were insufficient to prevent asset loss and damage to beneficiaries affected by a tidal surge in October 2010 with significant impacts felt to financial, social, human and physical capital. The impacts to IGAs were mapped and crab fattening and vegetable businesses were found to be the most affected livelihood options. The average price for a crab fattening intervention is 8000 TK with an average loss of 10,000 TK. The average price for a vegetable business is 6000 TK with a loss of 8000 TK. Those proving more resilient were tailoring and cloth and ring slab business, while all IGA options saw significant losses (see Nokrek and Alam 2011 for more detailed information).

Ex-ante approaches to climate change and disaster should be given a higher priority: Findings show that the 2010 tidal surge made extremely poor beneficiaries more vulnerable by destroying the few assets they owned. Community infrastructure, household equipment (housing, poultry, sheds etc.), sanitary tube wells, productive assets, poultry and livestock and natural assets (e.g. water bodies) were all affected. Despite the existence of community level awareness raising sessions on disaster risk management already integrated within the project, findings suggest that greater attention to ex-ante risk reduction is needed. Ex-post resilience measures, such as linking with existing services including cash for work, relief and additional financial support were arranged only after the disaster, up to several weeks later, only after

the damage was done. Ex-ante disaster risk reduction methods can be prioritized further to prepare households (by exploring indigenous methods), at the community level (increasing access to social protection programmes) and at the political economy level (by challenging the dominance of shrimp farmers in the area; and putting pressure on actors to build more secure embankments; and challenging the state to address the extreme siltation build up in the rivers).



Uttaran Beneficiary Household following recent flooding in August 2011

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING HOUSEHOLD RESILIENCE TO PROTECT ASSETS FROM DISASTER

- Providing a strong housing structure for small businesses and shops (such as grocery shops, betel leaf and vegetable businesses).
- Building cyclone resistant houses (with bamboo made walls and corrugated sheets for roofs).
- Providing secure boxes with locks.
- Using wooden sheds for ducks, poultry birds and goats.
- Using net or bamboo fences and raising ponds/hatchery dikes (for crab and fish culture).
- Providing more female-focused livelihood options for female-headed households which enable an immediate cash flow.
- Providing the ownership of assets to women.

3.8 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Protection and development in times of disaster: Findings from SCUUK show significant impacts to children's education following shocks and disasters. In these cases, children not only found it more difficult to physically travel to schools, but schools altered their opening hours or closed altogether. A sample of FHHs shared that in the aftermath of the flood, they were forced to rely on their children's income, with children having to stop their education and become fully engaged in employment.

Survival: Progress towards building human capital was severely hampered in the aftermath of Cyclone Aila, Sidr and the 2010 tidal surge, with illnesses and sickness increasing holding knock-on implications for the immediate and long-term health of children now, in youth and in later adulthood. To shield the impact to children, adults were found to restrict their own consumption in favour of their children.

Involvement of children with asset management: PAB has drawn attention to the role of children in helping households on the road to graduation. While it is hoped that once graduated, households have more resources to invest in children's schooling and health, a current dilemma is that in the process of trying to graduate, households may actually need to depend (to varying extents) on the involvement of their children. For example, PAB found that during the period that men migrate for paddy/boro cultivation (early and late in the season), women and children (between 7 and 14 years) are increasingly taking care of the pumpkins and other vegetables, involving intensive work. Women also reported leaving their children to tend to the vegetables so that they could carry out other work. This presents a dilemma: on the one hand, this means that the household effectively has access to more income sources, but on the other, this involves an opportunity cost in terms of the health and education outcomes of the child involved, arguably implicating the overall potential for positive impacts of the intervention to be sustained. Extreme poverty places a heavy strain on children (see for example Save the Children, 2005)⁸ and challenges their rights including those to survival, development, protection and participation. This raises a question as to whether a more child-friendly lens can be mainstreamed in intervention design and the continuous process of learning and adjustment during implementation.

⁸ UNICEF have recently emphasised the need to focus on the children at the very bottom of the economic ladder to ensure the most effective and efficient way to help children and communities in need. The UNICEF (2010) report "Narrowing the Gaps to Meet the Goals" is available here:
http://www.unicef.pt/docs/Narrowing_the_Gaps_to_Meet_the_Goals_090310_2a.pdf

4 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has outlined some of the main learning identified throughout the protecting the gains research projects. Given the multiplicity of risks and deprivations facing the extreme poor, it became obvious that the extreme poor demand a different approach - which actively works to ensure their improvements can be sustained in the long-term.

In terms of process, the protecting the gains research packages were unique in that they were short (3 month) research projects designed to unveil insights on a key set of issues individual to each project but also united by the cross-cutting theme concerning protecting the gain and ensuring long-term impact. As such there was an emphasis on sharing findings from the start (in a mid-way sharing session, with the EPRG, with project staff and through other forums such as conferences and policy dialogues.⁹ In addition, the work was completed and circulated prior to the Phase 2 of Scale-Fund Round 1 and the contract signing of Scale-Fund Round 2 and Innovation Round 4. The three month time-scale of these projects was appropriate for these studies and as an initial start in the first phase of research. However, as the research programme of shiree grows (in terms of number of projects, staff and issues to be researched), the framework needs to become more flexible to respond to different research needs i.e. research tasks which take 6 weeks, 3 months, or ones which demand a longer term approach (from 6 months to 1 year). This flexibility can be built in from here on.

The EPRG is an evolving forum for the shiree family to both design and share research findings. It is in a position to start organizing more directive sessions (e.g. planning of advocacy events), or themed groups, regional and national level events. The EPRG committee and its members can start to plan for these. In addition, with incoming resources to undertake research across the Innovation-Fund, the EPRG can start coordinating the prioritization of Innovation-Fund research issues.

Individual project recommendations are included in each of the working papers (see references), and the overarching national and local advocacy issues identified are included below in Table 4. In addition to these, the overall research findings have raised the following broad questions for further investigation. Each of these could be broken down further and open up areas for further research. These revolve around land, governance, gender, children, and responding to disaster.

⁹ E.g. Shiree housed a policy dialogue on *khas* land distribution in July 2011 in which Uttaran and PAB research was shared. Christopher Maclay and Hannah Marsden (Shiree) presented an in-depth investigation into Green Hill's conditional cash transfer at the DSA/EADI Annual Conference in the University of York 2010. NETZ also shared their research at a UNDP/University of Manchester conference on "Scaling up social protection in Bangladesh: Building effective social ladders and safety nets" in October 2011.

1. In what ways can projects further improve gender relations (for FHHs, and for women and men in MHHs)? Can this be done in a way which does not increase the already heavy burden of work undertaken by women (especially in times of disaster or abandonment)?
2. What is the overall benefit of providing land and IGAs in the long term? Given the political and timely process of this, what are the costs?
3. What is the long-term solution for ensuring the livelihoods of the coastal extremely poor?
4. Can approaches to climate change and disaster resilience be strengthened to be more *ex ante*/preventative? In what ways can preventative elements of the programme be strengthened to be in line with the “duty of care” policy? How then do projects become more able to distribute relief when needed?
5. Can a more child-friendly approach be taken? What linkages are being made with health and education services and can these be strengthened? How can the often inevitable reliance on children's employment be avoided (especially in IGA projects)?
6. Can elements of Care's governance approach be adopted more widely?

TABLE 2: NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL ADVOCACY ISSUES

The table below includes the national level advocacy issues identified throughout research Phase 1.

NGO	National level advocacy issue	Local level advocacy issue
Care	Need for a social protection policy to better meet the needs of the extreme poor.	Greater collaboration between UPs and NGOs for better targeting of SSNs towards the extreme poor.
DSK	Any eviction should be well planned along with concrete rehabilitation and compensation packages.	Campaign to provide compensation/ resettlement to the individuals affected by this particular eviction.
NETZ	Make safety net selection process	UP collaboration with NGOs for better targeting of Adivasi

	fair to include Adivasis.	extreme poor.
SCUK	Need for safe drinking water in the South-west. Build water purification plants in coastal areas	Long-term solution for adequate embankments. Shrimp producers - Stop making holes within the embankments.
Uttaran	Provide input packages with khas land transfers.	Input support and services are needed.

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ANNEX 1: SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED WHEN SCALING-UP THE SCALE-FUND PROJECT MODELS

Scale-Fund projects were selected on the basis of their proven experience of implementing models of poverty reduction, and as such their Shiree-funded projects were replications of these models on a larger scale. Through a lesson learning exercise, staff from each of the Scale-Fund projects identified their most significant learning and challenges so far.

In terms of successes, key lessons have emerged around the importance of promoting change through engaging with local government – primarily Union Parishads (UPs) (Care Bangladesh).¹⁰ Successful targeting of the extreme poor and subsequent positive impacts on household food consumption has also been reported (NETZ). Further, Uttaran's experience has highlighted the benefits of combining IGAs simultaneously with land transfer. In general, projects have confronted a variety of challenges in the field, revealing the multidimensionality of extreme poverty and the benefits of taking a holistic approach, particularly involving health interventions (highlighted by DSK).

The main challenges faced include: a lack of sufficient health and WATSAN facilities and their impact on income generation. Finding effective employment opportunities for the elderly and physically challenged has also proved challenging, and has raised the larger question of long-term state responsibility for their care. Projects have faced difficulties with influential land grabbers, promoting and maintaining beneficiary interest, and also in creating a local critical mass to carry forward advocacy activities at the local level.

¹⁰ The Union Parishad is the lowest tier of Government in Bangladesh.

KEY LESSONS FROM REPLICATION – SUCCESS EXPERIENCED WITH THE SCALE-FUND MODELS

<u>NGO project</u>	<u>Most Significant Success</u>	<u>Response</u>
Care SETU	<p>Promoting transparent and inclusive local governance. Setting the pace for institutional change through actively working with local government is seen as critical to reducing extreme poverty in a sustainable way.</p> <p><i>“As the process goes on, Union Parishad institutionalizes the local actions to address extreme poverty including specific budget allocation for the extremely poor. The impact is that Union Parishad is owning the development process” (Care participants - various, November 2010).</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engaging with UP members and chairmen for poverty analysis and planning; 2. Undertaking knowledge and capacity-building interventions for UP members (facilitation skills, poverty analysis, gender and rights awareness, financial management, participatory planning, management and negotiation, enabling business development); 3. Establishment of forums for civic engagement with local government (gram sabhas, reactivating standing committees) through creating “spaces” for civic engagement. 4. Promote participatory pro-poor governance based on joint local government-citizen development planning (such as open budget planning); 5. Facilitating improved targeting of social safety nets and emergency relief; 6. Establishing a system for the participatory monitoring and evaluation of UP performance.

DSK **Providing a holistic system of support to the extreme poor households directly along with collective efforts through the CBOs¹¹.**

Learning shows that isolated packages of support struggle to produce long lasting impact to extreme poverty. The extreme poor require more than just start-up capital to climb out of poverty. A combined approach, across multiple dimensions, is increasing the capacity of the target communities for uplifting from the extreme poverty.

The DSK-Shiree Model is providing access to asset transfers, capacity building (training, technical follow-ups and linkages) combined with satellite health clinics, hospitalization and WATSAN interventions. In addition, it is providing cash allowances for pregnant and lactating mothers, the elderly and physically challenged household members. The project is also providing specialized skilled based training such as tailoring, driving, beauty parlor and few others based on individual needs and capabilities under the apprenticeship supports.

NETZ **Successful targeting** of bottom 10% including the physically challenged.

Applying participatory rural appraisal methods during targeting, as well as including members of local government and all community members in the validation of BHH lists.

Working with Handicap International to assist physically challenged BHHs.

PAB Promotion of tested and innovative pro-poor technologies (i.e. sandbar cropping).

Engaging educational institutions through results demonstration (e.g. the Bangladesh Agriculture University and Haji Danesh Science & Technology

¹¹ CBOs- Community Based Organizations (a organized platform for the extreme poor slum dwellers).

University).

Establishing more formal market linkages between producers and buyers (due to the projects wider replication and the level of produce being cultivated).

Uttaran **Recovering and distributing khas land** to landless extreme poor people, and simultaneously providing asset transfer support.

Working with local government and local influentials, in a lengthy and political process to transfer land on a temporary and permanent basis. An integrated approach combing land and IGA package has enhanced the pace of poverty reduction.

SCUK Reaching the poorest of the poor i.e. the bottom 4%.

Strict compliance to selection criteria and incorporation of 'No MFI involvement.'

Household micro-planning has helped the project to revalidate the list of selected households. This has also served as a living tool for extreme poor households to confidently choose and decide the types of livelihood options on their own terms.

Good rapport building and effective coordination between field workers and various actors (local government, elites, service providers, entrepreneurs etc).

Source: NGO project staff responses to Scale-Fund Models Survey 2010-2011.

TABLE 2: KEY LESSONS FROM REPLICATION – CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED WITH THE SCALE-FUND MODELS

<u>NGO project</u>	<u>Most Significant Challenge</u>	<u>Response</u>
Care	<p>Exclusion of non-extreme poor through Shiree selection criteria which causes stress and tension to community solidarity built through the SETU approach.</p>	<p>Discussions and careful facilitation in communities.</p> <p>Facilitating access for the non-extreme poor to other local resources and programmes.</p> <p>Overlapping of other Care projects in given communities.</p>
DSK	<p>Eviction and fire explosions</p> <p>Internal and external migration of selected BHHs causes problems of time delays and re-selection.</p> <p>Lack of GoB-provided social protection for the urban extreme poor.</p> <p>Health and WATSAN situation.</p> <p>Lack of interest to be involved in business development as most of the extreme poor slum dwellers are illiterate and have poor skills except physical labor.</p>	<p>Inclusion of new BHHs.</p> <p>Maintaining regular communication through project team and CBO members, focusing on the benefits of technical and motivational support.</p> <p>Advocacy needed for urban-specific social protection.</p>

NETZ

Elderly facing difficulties raising livestock.

Encouraging good relations between the BHH and their relatives and neighbours who can help in time of difficulty – the Care Taker approach.

Counseling nearby group members residing nearby to extend support.

More visits are made by field staff to encourage the smooth management of IGAs.

Protecting land from grabbing.

Creation of local critical mass to carry forward advocacy work at the Union level (this is proving difficult since the members of the groups reside in different villages distant from each other).

Increasing the number of identified members. Federations which consist of two members from each group could be merged with the previous federations of the local PNGOs.

PAB

Chain effects of working with different stakeholders based on project management.

Continuous negotiation and consensus building among the stakeholders throughout the implementation process.

Common understanding yet to be developed on extreme poor and its criteria.

Uttaran

Combining the joint approach of recovering and distributing *khasland* and *khas* waterbodies along with distribution of material assets for ensuring sustained profit making for the beneficiary households.

Through regular dialogues and exchanges of opinion, it was possible to motivate BHHs to access the local level land related government institutions. The opinions of BHHs have always been prioritized while identifying appropriate income generating activities.

The influence of local land grabbers has posed problems for successful project implementation and failure by local politicians to implement the GoB policy for landless to receive land fisher folk to receive waterbodies.

Networking and lobbying with Government offices. Beneficiaries have been encouraged to claim their rights to *khas* land through rallies, demonstrations and through submitting applications to the District Commissioners offices.

SCUK

Identifying appropriate livelihood options for households in the coastal belt.

This has been challenging (and different to because:

- The scale of the intervention and the potential for saturating an area with the same IGAs (E.g. rickshaw vans, cattle-heads, goats and small-businesses).
- The area – the pilot of the intervention was undertaken in north-western districts.

To minimize market saturation, the team have been motivating beneficiaries and trying to diversify IGA options.

For the 4% of the bottom poor, the project has encouraged the respective BHHs to develop alternative arrangements. At the same time, the project has been working closely with the local government institutions and representatives to link beneficiaries with social safety nets.

Awareness raising sessions with beneficiaries and communities through courtyard sessions, regular progress

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- The high prevalence of elderly and physically challenged among the bottom 4%.
 - High vulnerability from exposure to disaster and impacts of climate change.

and vulnerability tracking, household mentoring, involving community support groups.

Developed temporary financial assistance (cash transfer) for the elderly and physically challenged beneficiaries. This needs to continue along side advocacy with local government.

- Regular distress monitoring, with additional supports to be provided to re-equip lost assets/replacement of assets, and explore and facilitate other avenues.
 - Mobilising community support groups, community mentors, and coordinating efforts with government health service facilities through a referral system.
 - Local and regional level advocacy to reconstruct/repair poor or damaged infrastructures and physical communication (roads, embankments, cyclone centres).
 - Raising resilience to climate change through DRR sessions.
 - Community mentors and support groups are intended as local agents for sustaining the project's activities, even after the withdrawal of project's support. The project is currently providing
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support to adolescents and youth of the extreme poor households in terms of skills/vocational training and job placement/apprenticeships to encourage graduation and break the intergenerational transfer of poverty.

Source: NGO project staff responses to Scale-Fund Models Survey 2010-2011.



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