

QUALITATIVE MONITORING OF SHIREE INTERVENTIONS:
CMS5 INTERVENTION TRACKING – 'TOP UP' ROI (2)

REFLECTIONS ON THE INTERVENTION (2) FOR HALIMA BEGUM

| Shiree Q2 Research on Extreme Poverty in Bangladesh | | | | | |
|---|---|-----|---|-----|----|
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| Institution | Save the Children | | | | |
| CMS1 Reference | 401-60-59-3-0086 (Household ID from CMS1) | | | | |
| Interviewee name | Halima Begum | Sex | Female | Age | 50 |
| Union, Upazilla and Zilla | Khaulia, Morrelganj, Bagerhat | | | | |
| Dates of Interview | 1st 08/12/10, 2nd 20.12.10, 3rd 06.06.11, 4th 25.07.11 | | 25.04.12 | | |
| Livelihood before and after the intervention | Before the intervention January 2011 | | April 2012 | | |
| | <u>Halima</u> Housework Domestic work in other house <u>Third son</u> Hired van puller | | <u>Halima</u> Housework Domestic work for employer Quilt stitching <u>3rd son</u> Driving an auto rickshaw (The owner is Halima's son-in-law who is now living in India) | | |
| Well-being Status | Destitute | | Rising to working extreme poor | | |
| Marital status and household composition | Widow, living with four children (3 sons and 1 daughter). She had 9 children. | | Widow, living with 3 children (2 sons and 1 daughter). At present one son is staying madrassa. | | |
| Keywords | Dwindling working capacity, homestead gardening, improve relationship with younger brother, lack of access to government facilities, physically weak, school stipend. | | | | |

INTRODUCTION

This is a top up reflection on the intervention of Halima. Her life history and more comprehensive first reflection on the intervention are published on the shiree website (<http://www.shiree.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Halima-Begum.pdf> and http://www.shiree.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Halima- -final_SF.pdf)

From her life history we have learned that Halima was the first child of her father's first wife. Her father went on to marry another woman and her mother and siblings ultimately had to find their own source of support despite the fact that Halima's father was well-off. Halima and her mother were forced to work as labourers and domestic maids. Halima had an extreme poor marriage was married at 13 to an exceptionally poor man whose mother was

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a beggar. During their marriage Halima and her husband married off 3 daughters at great expense and endured cyclones, one of which took the life of her husband destroyed her assets and her home. *Her two eldest sons migrated and this loss of support was difficult for her as she was left with her third son, who has an injured leg, to support her 3 younger children. She gets no support from her rich, rice mill owning brother who still holds on to her land inheritance.*

From the first reflection on the intervention which covers the period from February 2010 to July 2011, we have learned that as a result of SC-shiree intervention Halima's family gained some **initial short term economic benefit from the rickshaw van. However in May 2011 her son suffered an injury to his leg and was unable to work, thus reducing family income.** The health crisis had a negative impact on the household's financial situation and it became difficult for them to afford food and daily necessities such as education and medicine costs. However, on a positive **note Halima received training and gained knowledge on poultry rearing.** She vaccinated her poultry. It was also found that despite their economic crisis they bought two ducks.

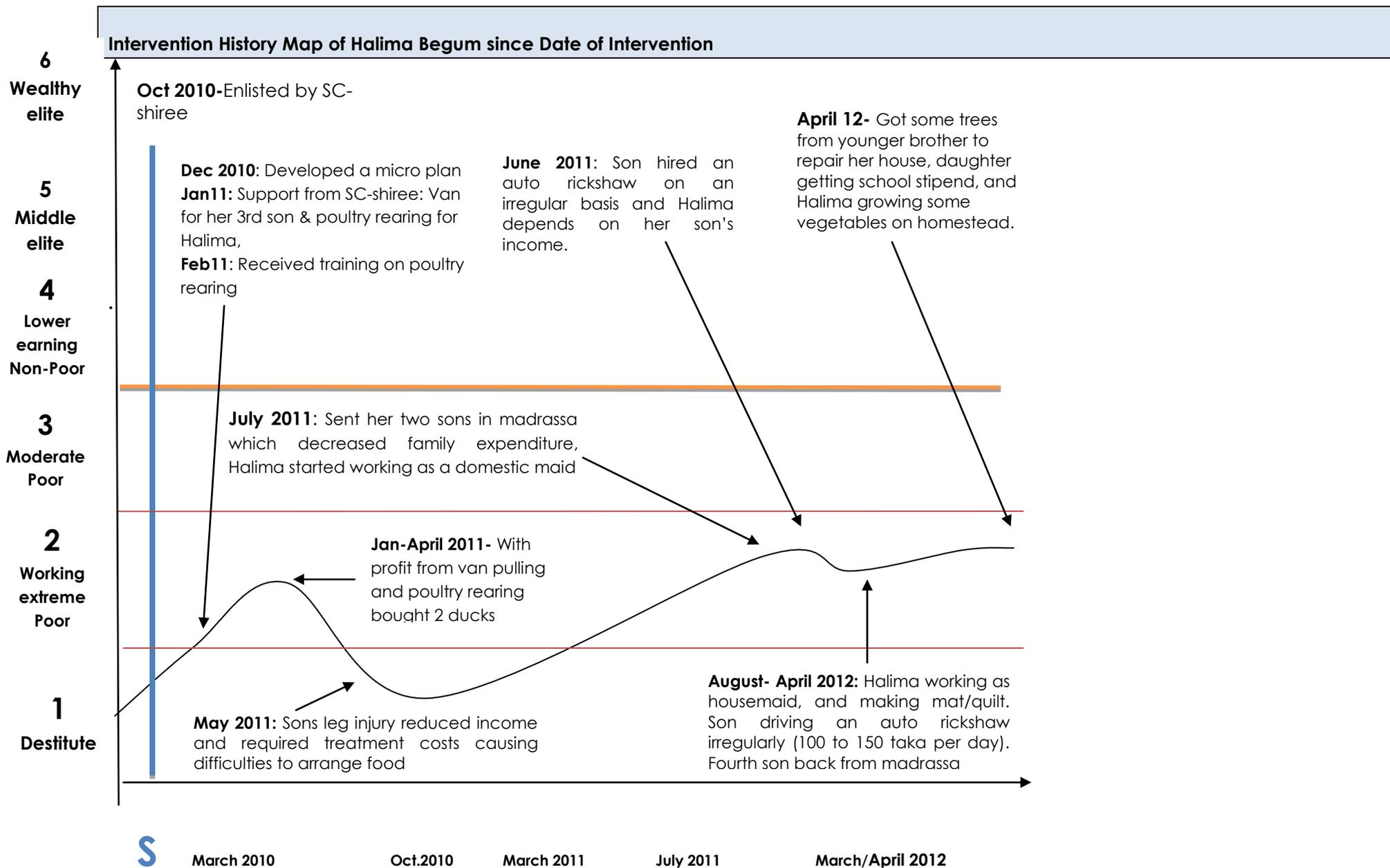
In this top up ROI (2) – e.g. July 2011 to April 2012 - we find that over the last one year Halima has been trying to overcome her destitute situation and has started **working as a housemaid again.** She has also been doing some quilt stitching while her son has been continuing driving the **auto rickshaw.** She has been able to send her two younger sons to a madrassa where they are staying in free of cost. She admitted her youngest daughter in a government primary school and she is receiving 100 taka school stipend per month. Now her wellbeing status is rising to working poor.

SUMMARY OF CHANGE IN KEY INDICATORS SINCE INTERVENTION

| Indicator | Just before the shiree intervention | Last interview (July 2011) | March/April 2012 |
|---------------------|--|--|--|
| Well-being category | Destitute | Destitute | Working extreme poor |
| Diets | Two meals with one vegetable most of the time. Sometimes she had only one meal and sometimes had to starve when she could not manage food. Got paid in food from her work as a housemaid which she shared amongst her children | Most of the time 2 meals a day although when her son stopped van pulling, there was no income and they had to survive on one meal. Due to lack of vegetables/she cooked 11 eggs | 2 meals a day with vegetables, which she grows in her homestead including bottle gourd, papaya, colocasia, spinach. Sometimes they cannot afford food and so she sends her youngest daughter go to her 2 nd daughter's house to eat. Sometimes when she gets food in return for |

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| | | | housemaid work which she shares with her children. |
| <p>Livelihoods now - in terms of contribution to that years' income</p> <p>For other principal adult member</p> | <p><u>Halima</u> Irregular work as a domestic helper (sweeping, grinding spices, cleaning at household level). She used to get paid three meals (rice and vegetables)</p> <p>Sometimes does mat weaving and <i>kantha</i> stitching.</p> <p>Gets 200-300 taka every year from betel nut selling from her brother's betel nut grove.</p> <p><u>Her third son</u> Van Puller (hiring a van for 20 taka per day) and used to get 60-80 taka per day but not on a regular basis.</p> | <p><u>Halima</u> After getting support from SC-shiree she stopped working as a housemaid as there wasn't much demand, but continued her mat weaving (2-3 mats in a month) and <i>kantha</i> stitching (2-3 <i>kantha</i> in a month).</p> <p><u>Third son</u> Started pulling the transferred rickshaw van from January 2011, six days a week and earned 100 to 120 taka per day. He continued van pulling until April 2011. Due to his leg problem he started hiring and driving an auto rickshaw, but not on a regular basis.</p> | <p><u>Halima</u></p> <p>1. Domestic help (7 to 10 days per month, depending on demand) for which she is usually paid in food.</p> <p>2. Mat weaving (200 to 300 taka per month) and quilt stitching (500 taka per month).</p> <p><u>Her 3rd son</u></p> <p>1. Auto-rickshaw driver earning on average 100 to 150 taka per day.</p> |
| <p>Productive assets ranked in terms of value</p> | <p>3-4 poultry birds.</p> <p>Her brother has taken her father's 40 decimal homestead land (including 200 betel nut and coconut trees) which should be shared 6 ways between 4 siblings (mother and step-mother). Halima's brother only gives her betel nuts to sell as she stays on the homestead. Collects fire wood on their land free of cost.</p> | <p>With the profit of van pulling her son bought 2 ducks and 2 hens.</p> <p>Halima also received 10 hens from Shiree project.</p> <p>One hen gave 7 chicks.</p> <p>Unfortunately four chicks died and one hen was stolen by a thief.</p> | <p>All poultry birds died during last monsoon season. Purchased 2 eggs to hatch from neighbour's hen. In the month of April 2012 she also bought a chicken but it got sick, so she killed it for meat.</p> |
| <p>House and homestead: ownership, condition of tenure, condition of house.</p> | <p>Dilapidated house with only two rooms (wall made of coconut and goal leaf with roof made from corrugated tin and goal leaf). As noted earlier her father left 40 decimals land; she will get 3 decimal of it. The property and the trees on it are still not divided among her siblings and mother.</p> | <p>The same dilapidated house of two rooms</p> | <p>The same dilapidated house of two rooms</p> |



NARRATIVE

Struggling in destitution and with domestic maid work as she ages

Over the last one year Halima has been struggling with her destitution. *She went back to working as a domestic maid 7 to 10 days per month, depending on demand in the village, in return for food. If she works for a whole day she gets 3 meals, if she works for a half day she gets 1 meal.* She shares whatever food she gets with her children. She says there are only two rich families in this village who require domestic maids on a regular basis. Previously she worked regularly in rich people houses for four years, but due to her old age her working capacity has decreased. This is partly the result of an accident she had when she was doing road construction work (after cyclone Sidr) which caused pain in her chest and prevents her from working hard. **Demand for her domestic labour has therefore fallen as rich people prefer to ask other people to help them who are able to work harder.**

Stitching Quilts but low demand

Halima tries to earn extra money by weaving mats and stitching quilts, but as these both depend on customers demand she has no fixed income per month.

Renting Van but needs repair

In December 2011 she rented out her van (that provided by SC-shiree Project) for a month and earned 20 taka per day. However some parts of the van need to be replaced immediately, so she has stopped renting it out until she can afford to get it repaired.

Son driving auto rickshaw but weak leg and rising supply of auto rickshaw drivers

Her third son is currently driving a tom-tom (an auto-rickshaw) and earning on average 100 to 150 taka per day. The tom-tom belongs to her son-in-law who is now in India, so he does not need to pay as rent. Due to his leg injury however he son is unable to drive the rickshaw seven days. He feels physically weak and cannot work hard, so he has to take rest for 2 days a week. There are also a number of auto rickshaws in their area so he gets fewer customers and less income.

Diet and education free through madrassa plus reduces dependents

Despite having to struggle to get by, she is at least able to provide food for her children with the help of her son's income. Moreover, in the month of July 2011 she also sent her two younger sons in the madrassa where she did not need to pay for education, food and accommodation. However the older of the two did not continue his study there and came back home in April 2012. Her youngest son who is now 10 years old is still studying at the madrassa but comes home in the summer vacation to visit. Halima is still trying to send her other son back to the madrassa as she wants him to learn Arabic and Bengali.

ANALYSIS DISAGGREGATED BY MATERIAL, RELATIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT

MATERIAL EMPOWERMENT: CHANGES IN ABILITY TO COMMAND MATERIAL WELL-BEING

In the last year Halima struggled with her extreme poverty and developed some strategies to lift her family from poverty.

- She sent her two sons to the madrasa and in doing so reduced the number of dependents in her household and associated expenditure.
- She has tried to cut food costs by growing some vegetables within her homestead for the family to eat every day.
- From the combined total of her son's rickshaw income and the money she gets from mat weaving and quilt stitching she can afford 2 meals a day.
- Sometimes she also gets additional food from villagers by doing some household chores for them.

Unfortunately none of this income is fixed and sometimes she still faces severe food shortages. However when this happens she is able to rely on her second daughter who is living in the same village and can provide food for them. This support means that Halima and her family never have to starve.

School stipend

This year her youngest daughter has also been getting a school stipend (100 taka per month). Although there is still much material insecurity in Halima's life, overall she is now better off than before the intervention.

RELATIONAL EMPOWERMENT: CHANGE IN POWER IN SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RELATIONS

The importance of Halima's daughters

Halima has been able to use the relationships she has formed with others to help her begin to move out of poverty. One important source of support for her has been her daughters. She has always had a good relationship with them and from the life history we learn that when she migrated to India **her third daughter left some poultry birds and her husband's auto-rickshaw for her.**

Although she cannot get additional support from her third daughter now that she has migrated, her second daughter still lives close by and has a hard working husband. As the couple can afford 3 meals day sometimes she is able to provide Halima with food for the family. Over the last few months Halima has also improved her relationship with her younger brother who has given her some logs to repair her house with.

Sons living at Madrasa to save on food costs

Previously she had been finding it very difficult to arrange her son's educational cost and food for them, and so sent them to a Madrassa in July-August 2011. Halima was able to ask the huzur (religious leader) to allow her sons to live in the madrassa, so that she would be free from anxiety over whether her sons were getting a good education and regular food.

Neighbour support

She also has a good relationship with her neighbours and is able to ask them for food in emergencies. Her neighbours also let her keep two chicken eggs that she bought in their house to be hatch by their hen. They also let her keep meat from her chicken in their freezer until her youngest son comes home during the summer vacation when she will cook it. Although this type of support does not require much on the part of her neighbour, it makes a noticeable difference to Halima's life.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT

Insecure work, stress and anxiety

Due to an accident she had which caused her to suffer chest pain; Halima was forced to stop working at the well-off villagers' house that she had worked in for four years. Now that she has gone back to working as a domestic maid she has to try to find work but this is uncertain because demand is now low and she has to wait to see who will ask her to work for them. This has causes her far more stress and anxiety then she used to have when she had a regular job at the well-off villagers house.

Concern about her physically weak son

Halima also worries about her son as he is physically weak and cannot work hard. ***She realizes now that she should not have asked for a van from SC-shiree project and instead thinks she should have opted for a small business.*** She thinks that her son would have been able to do this easily and it would have been far less exhausting work for him. When we spoke to him her son said he was planning to sell ice cream during summer.

Other younger son does not work nor goes to school

She is also stressed about her fourth son who stopped attending school and appears to be unwilling to engage in any income generating activities. Halima explained that he insists he is still too young to work but she cannot afford food for them if they do not earn themselves. She is therefore trying to send her son back to the madrassa.

Problematic resident status deprives of her social entitlement to help on housing

Another source of worry for Halima is her dilapidated house. During the monsoon it is very difficult for her to stay in her hut as rain water drops in to the house. Although she wants to rebuild her house she has no capacity to do so. As she is not a legal resident in this union parishad (she is voter of Amtola Union parishad) she does not get any facilities from the local government institute. After Cyclone Sidr when her house was damaged she took shelter in her third daughter's house that had a housing grant and so was staying in Amtola during the

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voter list. She therefore applied for her national ID card from that union, but her two sons are voters in her current union parishad. ***Due to this problematic resident status she is deprived of her social entitlement.***

GENDER EMPOWERMENT

Owner of shiree asset, but son manages it and he does what he likes

Halima is the primary owner of the Shiree asset but she opted for an asset that her son would have to manage i.e. a rickshaw. Therefore since the intervention she has had to depend on her third son in terms of decision making. **She cannot tell her son what to do as he does whatever he likes.**

As her son is the main income earner she has to rely on his decisions, which she would not have had to do if she had opted for an asset which she could have earned money from on her own.

Mobility increased since shiree intervention

There are some positive aspects however as since the SC-shiree intervention her mobility has increased and she is now able to go the Morrelganj CODEC office. She also no longer has any hesitation to talk to male NGO staff.

WIDER CONTEXT – CHANGES SINCE THE INTERVENTION

Poultry failing in this area despite vaccination

Poultry rearing appears to be an unsuccessful livelihood option in this area. Although most beneficiaries vaccinated their poultry, they still could not protect them.

Similar experiences to Halima can be found from Moni Talukder and Farida (see their ROI 2s).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY

Asset choice

Halima was adamant to opt for having a rickshaw van transferred to her for her injured son to drive. Now she realizes she made mistake because as her son was injured it was not a suitable livelihood option for him or the family. Perhaps she should have had some better guidance from field officers.

Similarly, poultry rearing also seems to be an unsuitable option for Halima, as although she vaccinated all her birds they still became sick.

She had developed a strategy to earn money by renting out her van, but due to problems with a tyre and ring they have to wait until they can get a mechanic to fix it.

Thoughts of running a small business but is in need of support

Halima is now thinking that she would like to run a small business e.g. stock business. She is however worried about risks and thinks that grocery shops are risky because villagers like to purchase grocery items on credit and shopkeepers are forced to agree in order to maintain good relationships with them. She is therefore unsure of what business she would like, and has no savings with which to start it with. **Overall it seems that SC-Shree intervention did not help them much to move out their extreme poor situation.**

ANALYSIS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Possibility of vocational training for adolescent son

Save the Children provides some technical and vocational training for adolescent girls and boys which Halima's third son could benefit from. SCI could arrange for him to have vocational training on auto mechanics and servicing or other locally demanded jobs. This would enable him to engage with less hard work and ensure that he earns on a regular basis.

Promote mat weaving?

As Halima also cannot work hard because of her chest pain, SC should also think of ways they can help Halima to promote her mat weaving work. By developing their technical skills Halima and her son may be able to ensure their family sustainably graduate from poverty.

Build better safety net linkages

One problem that Halima currently suffers from is a lack of linkages with social safety net services. Halima became a voter in Amtoli Union parishad which is a different union parishad to where she is living (no). As a widowed extreme poor female she is entitled to widows allowances but she is not getting any facilities from her union parishad. During my field work I have explained her situation with the Partner NGO staff (field supervisor) and requested that he settles this problem.