



EXPANDING CAPABILITIES and ADDRESSING DISCRIMINATION

Social and Economic Transformation of the Ultra Poor (SETU) Project

SUSTAINABLE changes occur when an extreme poor person or household reaches a level of economic well-being sufficient to meet basic needs, and achieves the levels of social and political inclusion necessary to ensure resilience to external shocks and to sustain their improved level of well-being over the longer term. Sustainability also depends on how much the community can proactively engage with the local government and other service providers. CARE Bangladesh recognises the need for development interventions to work at and beyond the household level. The graduation

model aims to address the so-level factors such as poor market linkages, weak governance, and inequitable gender relations. Social and Economic Transformation of the Ultra Poor (SETU) aimed at achieving economic, social and political empowerment of 45,000 targeted extreme poor households of northwest Bangladesh for sustainable graduation out of extreme poverty. It addressed the underlying causes of extreme poverty i) limited and fragile livelihood opportunities; ii) social inequalities which perpetuate in different forms of exploitation, dependence, discrimination and

marginalisation; iii) weak governance at all levels that results in lack of participation of extreme poor and poor people in UP and local development process; iv) poor health and nutritional situation. The core of SETU approach is community-led total development that helped to develop Community Action Plan based on Participatory Poverty Analysis to address underlying causes of deprivation and marginalization. The process enhanced pro-poor and inclusive local leadership, community solidarity and built resilient communities through self-help groups and

constructive engagement with Union Parishad and both Government and private service providers. The project facilitated access to economic opportunities—expanding opportunities, exploring untapped potentials and linking markets/industries. The project facilitated analysis to identify context-specific available skills and resources and local market opportunities. It used value chain analysis to identify potential sectors for engaging the poorest. SETU then provided beneficiary households (BHH) with assets (start-up capital) for income generating activity (IGA). It also provides nutrition

supplements and counselling, business and other forms of training. Under the Economic Empowerment of the Poorest project, funded by the Government of Bangladesh, the UK aid from the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), CARE-Bangladesh implemented SETU in partnership with ESDO, GBK, RBNS, SAP-BD and SKS Foundation from March 2009 to August 2016 in 25 Unions of 7 Upazillas in Rangpur, Nilphamari, Gaibandha and Lalmonirhat districts.

Findings of the final evaluation and other researches and community level analyses show a significant and continued improvement in the lives of the project beneficiaries.

PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over 800% increase in monthly income and expenditure: average monthly household income reached to BDT 10,374.66 in 2015 from BDT 1151 in 2009. Average monthly household expenditure increased to BDT 7261.45, which were BDT 1189 in 2009.

Improvement in food security: 98% of the beneficiary households are able to have year round at least 3 meals a day with sufficient protein and vegetables.

Increase in assets: 79% of beneficiary households have asset holdings valued at greater than BDT 10,000 which was

less than BDT 5000 in 2009, and 90% of the households have bought productive assets such as livestock and houses.

98% Communities are open defecation free: Community-led total sanitation (CLTS) was facilitated as an entry point for community mobilization. It has reduced frequent incidence waterborne diseases like diarrhea, dysentery, etc.

Better housing: The size of houses increased significantly from nearly 14 sqm to over 20 sqm. Also, considerable changes are visible in the materials

used in wall and roof construction over the years.

Employment in private sector: 546 women/girls in locally set-up rug factories, 201 women/girls in RMG industries and 286 young boys in G4S are employed.

Savings and access to finance: 73% of beneficiaries are engaged in community based savings. Average savings per household is around BDT 4500, which was negative during the baseline. Savings groups have mobilized BDT 2,65,31,257 and utilized (loan for the group members) BDT 2,30,55,725 for

income generation activities. They are running financial transactions with commercial banks.

Access to social safety nets: The average monthly household income from Social Safety Net Program has increased 16 times (from BDT 18.26 to BDT 303.83). UP's budget allocation for extremely poor has significantly increased.

Drastic reduction in discriminatory and exploitative practices: Nearly 85% participants reported that incidence of discriminatory and exploitative practices such as taking

high interest loans and the advance sale of labour, which make them more resilient in addressing generational cycle of poverty.

Health and nutritional awareness: Awareness is raised among mothers, children (0-60 months), adolescent girls and other family members of households about the positive impact of breastfeeding, micro-nutrient consumption, and supplementary feeding. Project's Iron and Folic Acid supplementation significantly reduced the prevalence of anemia in extreme poor pregnant women (from 70% in baseline and 43% in end line).

HOW THE CHANGES HAPPENED

Analysis of poverty, discrimination and marginalization at every community: The project facilitation started with the participatory poverty analysis in each targeted community. A set of PRA tools developed by CARE were used to explore poverty context, social and economic relations and trigger community led local collective actions.

Facilitation of Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS): CLTS was triggered in most SETU-implementing communities as an entry point for community mobilization and fostering empowerment.

Community Based Savings Group (CBSG): Participatory Poverty Analysis triggered the formation of CBSG to cope with day to day shocks and vulnerabilities contributing to a more resilient community. CBSG reduced dependency on mohajons and moneylenders during monga. These groups also work as a platform for women to play leadership roles.

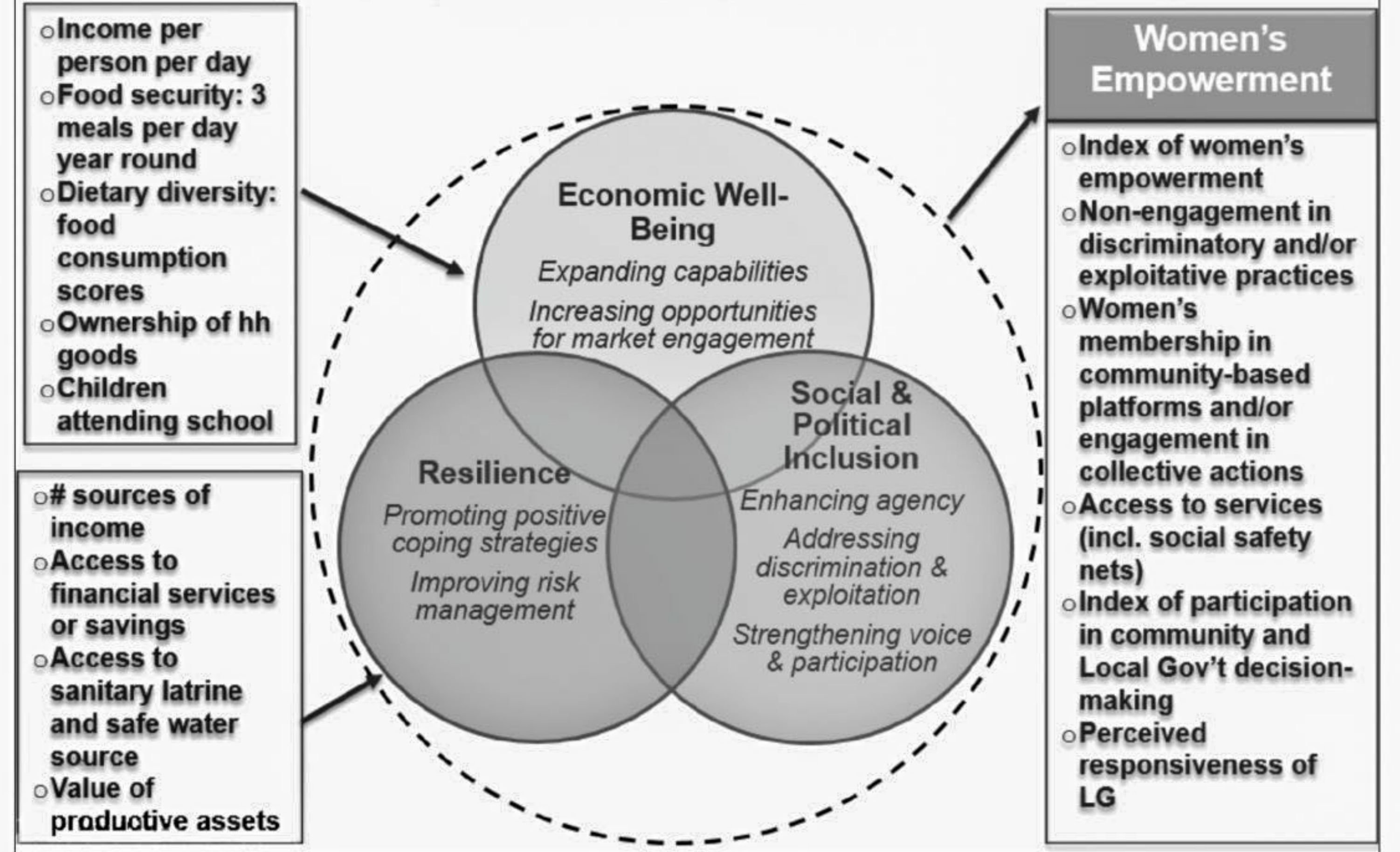
Micro health insurance for rural disadvantaged communities rolled out: To strengthen household resilience against health shocks, SETU has partnered with Pragati Life Insurance Ltd. and piloted an exclusive Micro Health Insurance program. Under this program a total of 2477 BHHs enrolled in 100 CBSGs have been brought under micro health insurance support, entitled to get health premium upto BDT 20,000.

Empowerment Knowledge and Transformative Action (EKATA) – women's platform: 25 EKATA groups were established with the facilitation of the project to work on addressing women's issues, such as, gender-based wage discrimination, early marriage, dowry, VAW, education and social justice. They have successfully dealt many gender related issues.

Swavab Neta Sangathon - Natural Leaders' Organization: The project helped to form 25 NLOs in 25 working unions, where leaders emerged from marginalized communities come together at a federation to discuss about poverty issues that require attention of local government and service providers.

Pro-poor and inclusive local governance
SETU worked with Union Parishads to develop a vision of poverty eradication and development (both long and short term). The project developed capacities of 25 UPs recognize the importance of engaging and developing relationships with citizens (and NLOs - their representative organizations). It helped to actively create and sustain spaces (Ward Sava, open budget, committees) for citizen participation, particularly

Sustainable Economic, Social and Political Transformation of Ultra poor The CARE Extreme Poverty Graduation Model



the poorest and women (and their leaders), in the joint planning, implementation, and monitoring of development plans and local decision making capitalizing UPs annual planning cycle. The project invested to change the mind set of elected local representatives so that they show openness to real citizen influence on policies through formal mechanisms such as standing committees, and also ensure the inclusion of the alternative leadership from the poorest (NLOs) and the participation and dignified position of women in these formal committees, so ensuring resources and opportunities are identified and channelled to the poorest.

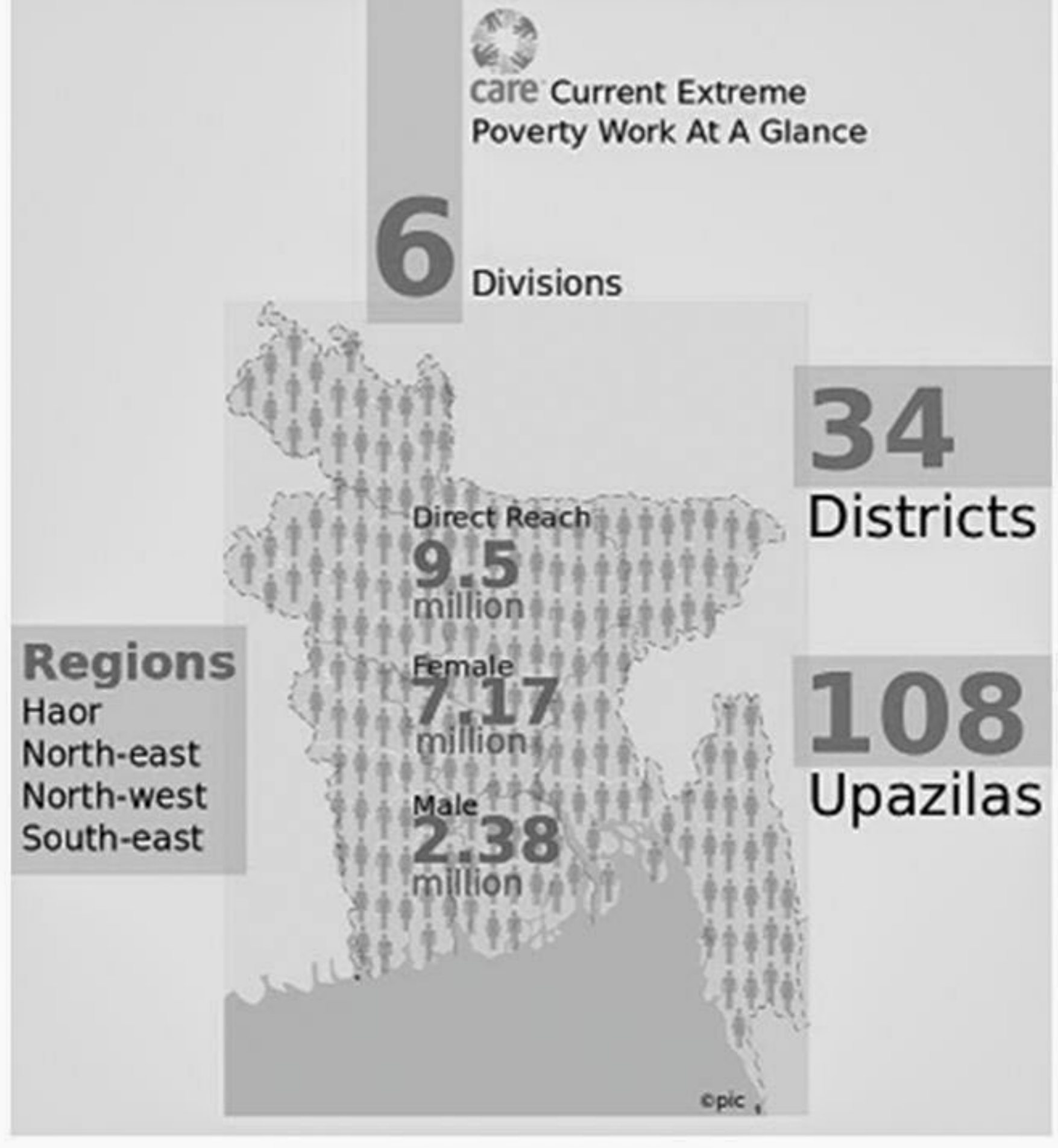
Monga mitigation work: SETU facilitated monga mitigation work in different forms/ways. It directly supported 6,256 households by engaging Cash for Work (CFW), which was implemented in coordination with UPs during the start up of project, so that poorer households do not need to adopt negative coping strategies such

as lending money from mohajans or taking dadonor advance labour selling.

Asset delivery: SETU provided assets (IGA start-up and necessary training or technical advice) to each of its beneficiary households. Analysis of

interest and available context-specific opportunities skills/experience of the household and local market was done prior to the delivery of the asset. Per household average input support provided by the project is USD 106.59, which is equivalent to BDT 8347

CARE's Current Extreme Poverty Work At A Glance



Sustainable income generation through Private Sector Engagement
A total of 546 women are employed in locally set-up rug factories by Classical Handmade Production, a private enterprise in collaboration with the project. The project also collaborated with multi-parties and ensured employment of 201 women in garments. Through G4S, the project also created job opportunities for 286 young people.

Facilitation of sustainable social enterprises
The project helped CARE to develop Living Blue, a workers and artisans owned social enterprise, which is about fair

trade where the artisans not only get a fair wage and democratically manage and run their own businesses, but also have total control over profits. The surplus generated by Living Blue contributes to the general well-being of local communities and help to create sustainable social, cultural and economic life. A total of 1700 workers and artisans have been benefiting from this enterprise.

SETU selected and trained up women beneficiaries, and engaged in selling products of the companies as rural sales agent. For this, the project collaborated with JITA, a CARE-supported social enterprise that provided them required technical and networking support.

Nutrition intervention: SETU provided nutritional awareness and deworming support to all its beneficiaries; counselling on maternal nutrition, exclusive breastfeeding and IYCF to pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers; and nutrition and personal hygiene education to adolescent girls. Fathers of over 2 year old children and husbands of pregnant women received orientation training on child and maternal nutrition. Pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and adolescent girls received IFA tablets. Children of 7-24 months old provided with Micro Nutrient Powder (MNP). 280 Community PustiKarmi (CPK) received basic and refresher training. In addition, Traditional Birth Attendants, religious leaders, School Teachers and UP Members were also trained.

Linking the communities to GoB services: Communities were assisted to get greater services from DAE, DoL, DoF, Dept. of Forest, BRDB, Department of Forest, Department of Social Service, Upazila Parishad, Spices Research Institute, etc. They also have been linked to support of local GoB health facilities. The services included Antenatal care (ANC) check-up, Postnatal Care (PNC) check-up, Vaccination, Family Planning Methods and nutritional drugs like vitamin A, Iron & Folic Acid (IFA) and Calcium tablets.

Humanitarian support: In response to cold-wave, tornado and fire incident 15,000 households were provided necessary support during the project period on a case by case approach. Our experience of SETU project leads us to contribute in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of ensuring sustainable livelihoods with no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, gender equality and clean water and sanitation for all at a scale throughout Bangladesh. CARE Bangladesh is committed on to engage with Government and development partners for extreme poverty free Bangladesh that 'no one is left behind'.