

**From
No one
To
Someone**

Success stories of some Women Fighters of HELP-UP against poverty

**Interventions of the project HELP UP- Implemented by Islamic Relief, Bangladesh
Co-Financed by European Union and Islamic Relief Worldwide**



**This project is funded by
The European Union**



**A project implemented by
Islamic Relief, Bangladesh**

Disclaimer: This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Islamic Relief, Bangladesh and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

“From No one to someone” is the tale of some (once) severely support seeking women from Rangpur, northern part of Bangladesh. Rangpur one of the Monga suffered regions is the home of many “forget to smile” people. This tale is the tale of those fighters who turned back and took control over their “fate “and banished their sorrowful past. Now their life has changed a lot. Happy are their family and the neighbors. Islamic Relief, Bangladesh also very delighted who is proud to be a part of their “smile” by implementing HELP UP project with the support from European Union. Hope this tale will push more wheel of fortunes, will bring back bring more ‘smiles’ in every corner of Bangladesh.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
1. <i>I only had a piece of cloth to wear</i>	6
2. <i>You showed me the way and I worked on my intelligence.</i>	9
3. <i>Many a days we survived only on boiled flour with salt</i>	13
4. <i>Those who don't work on their intelligence and don't work hard are more likely to suffer</i>	17
5. <i>Now I know Even I also can do</i>	21
6. <i>Now I have my own money</i>	24
7. <i>I won't let any of my members to beg or work as house maid ever</i>	27
8. <i>We will be the leaders like banana tree that produces another young tree before it dies not like the banyan tree which don't let other trees to grow.</i>	31

Some helpful terms

Shomity: a group of community through which many group activities implement at the community level.

Hali: counts 4 (like dozen counts 12)

Clay-bank: a clay pot for saving money. This practice is following since generations.

Worked as domestic help: This is a kind of day labor job. They receive some amount of food as payment but commonly not the cash. This food could be a handful of rice, lentils, some very ordinary vegetable and leaves etc.

Member, Vice Chairman : They are the honorable elected members of the local government.

“Cash for work” : It is one of the safety net programs of the government managed by local government. Usually government made list is followed here for granting this opportunity to the people. However, transparency of this list is a question to many.

Background of this story:

Islamic Relief, Bangladesh has implemented a project named Health Education and Livelihood Programme for Ultra poor or Help-UP with the financial support of European Union in the munga affected areas . Three years long HELP Up is implementing from 2009. The objective of the project is to improve food security of rural ultra poor especially women headed households and to contribute towards achieving the 1st Millennium development goals.

A total of 31,666 people from 10,000 disadvantaged families are made part of the project. HELP UP is implementing in 21 unions of Gangachara, Kaunia and Taraganj upazillas of greater Rangpur district. Among the selected 10,000 supported families, 8,400 are female-headed households who are socio-economically deprived, excluded and discriminated and their choice and opportunities are too limited.

The major activities of the project include: skill development of the entitlement holders on production activities, and management of those based on their choice , Productive means of livelihood distribution, development of team-building and empowerment, supporting in savings management, provide livelihood allowance, raising awareness and providing trainings on disaster management, preparations, health and hygiene , supporting in tree plantation and vegetable farming, running camps on human and livestock health care and free medical treatment and provide medicines.

I only had a piece of cloth to wear

Feroza Begum , 55 years, ID no TKU 01329, Taraganj, Rangpur



There are three members in my family including two daughters. I cannot even recall the age when got married. After marriage I came here from Mymensingh, where I used to live. I lost my husband eighteen years ago. My miseries with two daughters started just after this accident. For surviving I started working as domestic help and lived on whatever I received from that. Sometimes it was only some hand full of rice or beans and many a times there was nothing. One day in an accident I broke my hand still that hand hurts at times. I couldn't go for work, finished all my little savings and after starving for three whole days I started begging. From then I became a beggar.

Being a mother of two daughters I must arrange wedding of at least one of them. Very hardly I managed elder daughter's wedding with that money I saved from begging. Also my

neighbors helped a lot to arrange that wedding. After this event, I became member of Bahadur Para Shomity of Islamic Relief through a survey by them. I received 500 tk monthly for 18 months from them. With the money of the first 3 months' saving, I bought a goat for 1500 tk. From that mother goat I got 2 kids, sold those two for 2000 tk each and from that 4000 tk profit I repaired my home. Condition of my home was very poor. I started making money from the goat, bought from my first 3 months' saving and from that moved to hen and duck rearing. I practiced the learning from your training on chicken and duck rearing and with the Grace of Allah

now I have 30 hens and 5 ducks. Now I can eat meat, eggs and also sell eggs. I also received a cow worth tk 10750 from you for fattening. Following learning from your training I took care of that cow and sold that for 24000 tk. Thus I made a good profit. Your medicines and food for the cow helped me a lot in making money. From the profits of goat, hen and cow I bought another cow for 7750 tk. Regular attendance of shomity meetings made me to know about the livestock and poultry diseases, taking care of them, practice of hygiene etc. Many important things I am doing now which I never did before, like cleaning hands with soap before cooking and eating, washing hands with soap or ashes after coming from latrine, wearing sandals in latrine. Now I keep my home clean.

My time has improved a lot from before. I am planning to buy a land for cultivating crops, to have more ten cows to be well enough. I don't want to beg again; don't want to seek for help from people anymore. My children are happy. I share food and money with them. I believe I can live without the help from Islamic Relief now. My goat, hen and cows will

"I don't want to beg again; don't want to seek help from people anymore".....

return me profits. I won't be empty handed anymore. Once no one ever considered me as a human but now people come to me to learn cow, goat and poultry rearing. Here people had no idea about 'feeding containers' to feed cows and goats not even me. They also now are using feeding containers for their livestock like me. Now people ask for my suggestions for taking care of their livestock. Many started poultry and livestock business after me. Now I'm very happy. I only had a piece of cloth before to wear. You gave me a new life.

Note: For her remarkable achievement she was covered in the news of a private tv channel ATN bangla. She was interviewed live and the program was aired in all news of Diganta TV on 17 March 2011.



Figure 1 Her present neat and clean mud built home
Which was only a thatched shed before



Figure 2 Feeding her cows
Following the learning from the livestock training she made a separate room for feeding livestock which is a very new practice in her locality



Figure 3 Separate Room for her cows
On the roof she planted vegetable (pumpkin) to meet the family need

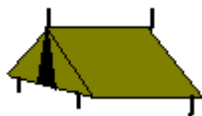


Figure 4 Her duck family

Life changing path of Feroza Begum



Left alone with nothing but this shed to live in with 3 daughters



Became member of IRB

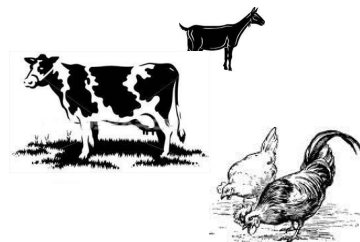
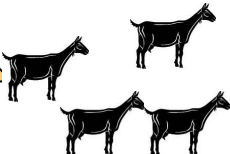
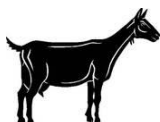


She cannot even recall the age when got married and lost husband eighteen years ago.

Started working as domestic help and lived on whatever she received

In an accident broke her hand, could not go out to work and after starving for three whole days she started begging.

Changes that happened due to HELP UP



Received 500 tk as monthly allowance for 18 months. With the first 3 months' saving, she bought a goat for 1500 tk. Received training on goat rearing, IGA management, hygiene practice, preparing nutritious food

From that mother goat she got 2 kids, sold those two for 2000 tk each and from that profit repaired home

also received a cow worth tk 10750 for fattening, sold that for 24000 tk From the profits of goat, hen and cow she bought another cow for 7750 tk

From that profit she started poultry rearing. Now she have cow, goat and poultry; a good home with hygiene latrine and tube-well for safe water. Grandchildren are also going to school

You showed me the way and I worked on my intelligence

Begum, ID # TKU 01131, 51 yrs, Kursha Union, Taraganj Upazilla, Rangpur



I am Begum of Kursha Union, Taragonj. I have four daughters and two grand children in my family but there is no son. My elder daughter and grandson live with me as her husband has left her. Before being member of Islamic Relief I was going through a very tough life. My husband had passed away 20 years ago. He had a little share in family-land but we lost his share due to a family-fight with the in-laws. After losing him and for that fight I with my daughters left the in-laws' house. I became helpless and homeless. No one grants a shelter to a helpless woman with children. I was offered a shelter granted by a man to whom I started working as domestic help in lieu of paying monthly home rent. My landlord also wished my daughters to work for him. But I was strict for

She had a very hard time. She works very hard all day and has done a lot. Even I'm learning from her about rearing chicken and goats. You people have helped her a lot.....

Rajia, one of Begum's neighbor, stated this during our conversation with her

their study, and my refusal made my landlord so angry that he destroyed my home¹ and pushed us to live elsewhere. Then another person offered me home and we started living there. I borrowed some money from a local micro-credit bank and bought a cow and a goat. Got 2 kids from that mother goat and sold those 2. My elder daughter was eligible for marriage and very hardly I arranged money for her wedding from selling my goat-kids. For my . I lost my cow and goat due to a disease and became empty handed again.

Then I became member of Islamic Relief Shomity and received 500 tk monthly. With the saving of first three months' I bought a goat for 1500 tk. After taking good care of it following your training instructions, provided medicine and feed I got more kids from it and sold a kid for 8500 tk. Then I stop working as domestic help .From the profit of goat sale I bought hen and started my poultry business. I have learnt many things on cleanliness, taking care of my goats, cows and hen from the trainings. I only

¹ 'Home' to them not always mean a well set-up structure. Even the shade/shelter where they live also called as home.

had this land and a shed before but now I have a home. With the profit I repaired my home, raised number of goats, bought cows and chicken. There was no separate latrine in my home before. Now I'm planning to have 50 goats, a large poultry farm of 100 chickens. People started poultry business inspired by me. They come to me for guidance for taking care of their chicken and goats. I have 24 goats and 7 chickens now. Before I had meal only once or twice a day but now I can have meal for 3 times. Once, I even couldn't have access to simple leaves or rice to eat before but now we often can have milk, meat and egg. It hurts that my husband passed away due to inability of affording medical

treatment and now I can afford treatment and medicines for my family.

I am confident about living without the help from Islamic Relief if you are not here anymore because my goats, chicken and cows will earn me money. Now I am smart enough to figure out how much, which are and when to sell. You are the root of my tree. Now I know taking care of that root and tree. You gift me hope. You showed me the way and I worked on my intelligence. So I can live without you if you are not here. My children and grandchildren have learnt the value of time and labor. Now they know money needs efforts. It makes me happy that I can leave resources for my grand children.

.....

Healthy chickens are coming from Begum's poultry farm.



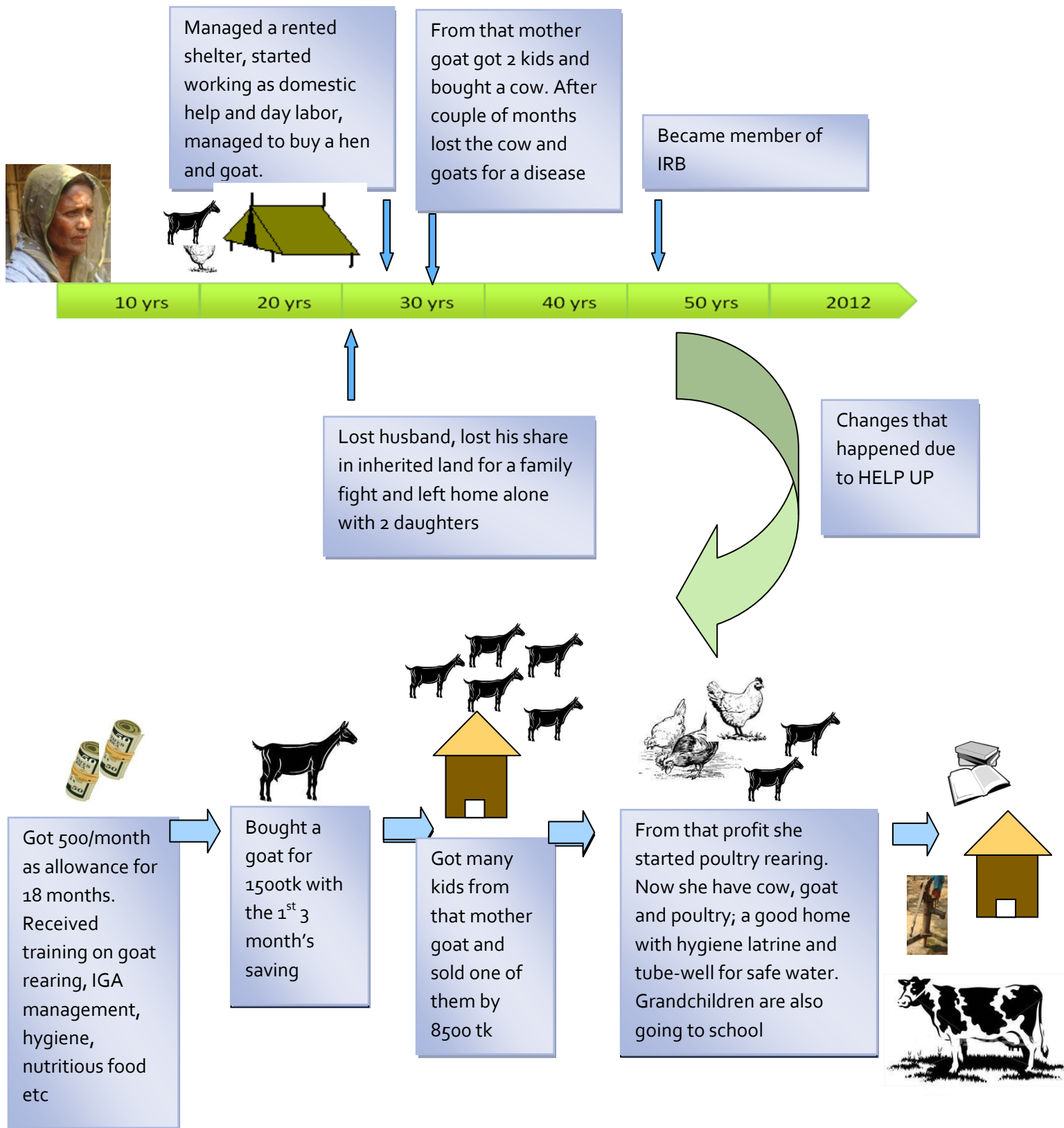
She is feeding her chickens following the guideline from the poultry rearing training she received from IRB.



She is feeding her healthy goats which she got from a mother goat.







Many a days we survived only on boiled flour with salt

Mosammat. Ayesha Khatun, ID# 2943, 41 yrs, Kaunia, Rangpur

My name is Mosammat Ayesha Khatun, live in Haragash village of Kaunia Upazilla. We are six in family including me, my son, three daughters and one grandson. My elder daughter and her son live with me after losing her husband. My life turned black after losing my husband 14/15 years back.. It used to be a very hard life. We seldom had three times meal per day. Many a days we only had boiled flour with salt. Those memories still haunt. For food I did whatsoever opportunity was available, I worked in the paddy fields, in the rice mills as day labor, worked as domestic help, sometimes collected some food asking from others and many a times I returned home empty handed.

Because of my severe situation I became member of Islamic Relief two years ago. I bought a fish net from the monthly allowance I received. I have a pond where I cultivate fish. From the profit of fish sale I bought two pairs of pigeons. From the sale of baby pigeons I made good profit and the savings from fish net, pigeons and from Islamic Relief's monthly allowance I bought a cow. From that cow I got two calves and now I have three cows. Now we even can have milk!!! My success was unbelievable to me and .I was so happy that I shared a glass of milk with my every possible surrounding ones even with the owner of that rice mill to whom I used to work for. I never ever thought of being so happy! Now I can afford medicine and medical treatment. Even I sent my daughter to Taragonj hospital for treating her stomach disease. I kept some milk for her to get her well soon.

I cannot say how happy I am who had nothing before. You helped me to open my eyes. Now I know how to be happier. I am planning to have more cows, goats and lease a land for cultivation from my savings. I know I can be happy without the help of Islamic Relief because my brain is now working. My neighbors are inspired by my success and the women are saving money, rearing pigeons. They come to me for suggestions and advice. They visit me to see my progress. I am very grateful to all of you.



Glimpse of Ayesha's practicing learning from the trainings by Islamic Relief



Fig: Ayesha is feeding her cows with care and love. She is preparing the food in a separate container for her cows which she learnt from trainings by IR. The calf (tied behind) was born in her home after taking proper care of the mother cow.



Fig: Her healthy pigeons flew down to feed. She spread grains as feed.

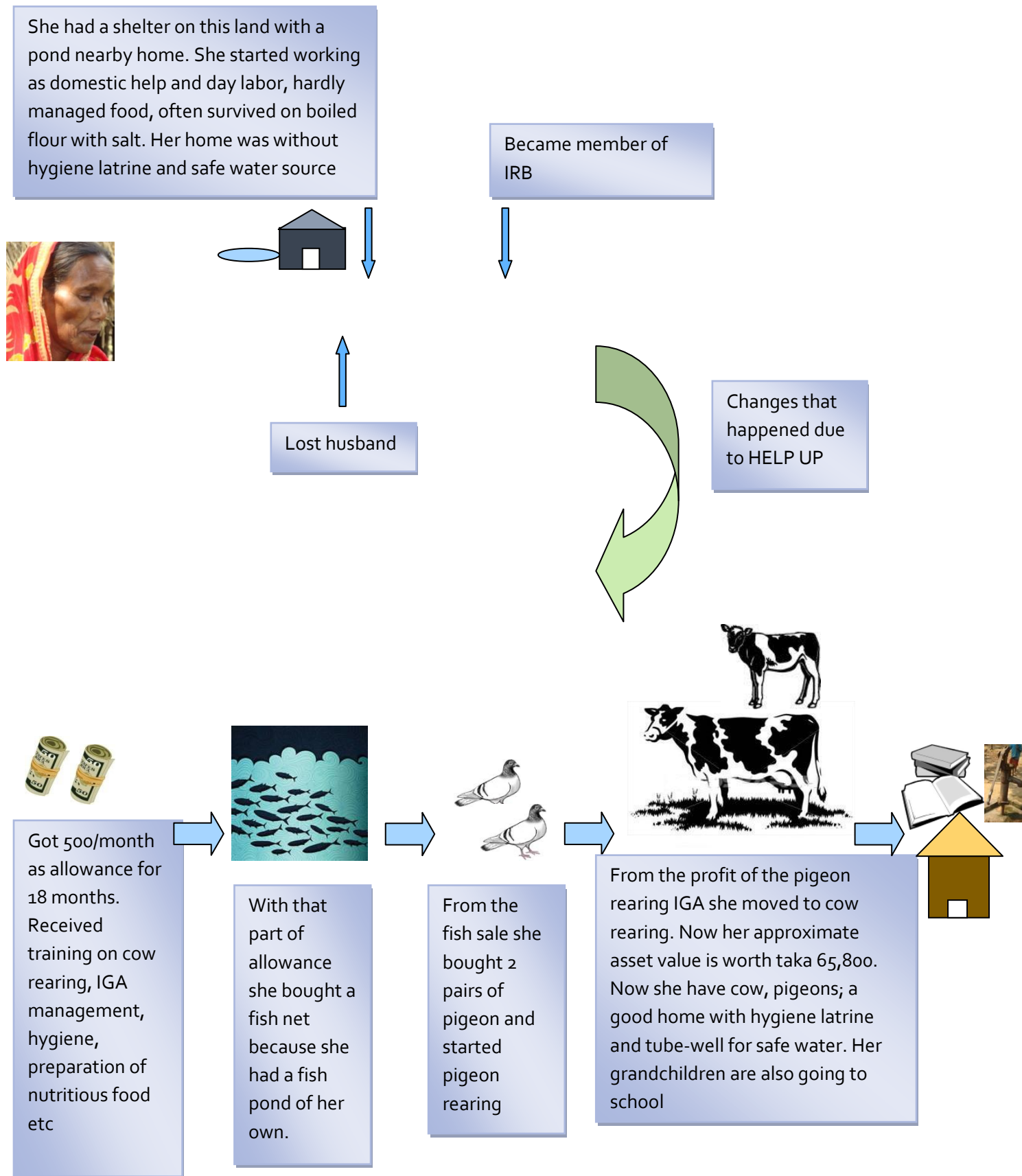


Fig: baby pigeons (squabs) are ready to go to the market.

P.S. This is a unique carrier for pigeons found in the northern region of the country. The basket like carrier is made instantly from banana tree bark and tied with a piece of rope

Fig: Ayesha is pulling out the babies from the nest to sell. Baby pigeons are demandable in the market.





Those who don't work on their intelligence and don't work hard are more likely to suffer

Mosammat Alema Khatun, ID# TKU 01196, 40 yrs, Ghanirampur Village, Taraganj, Rangpur

I came in this village after marriage. Now I live here alone. Story of my life is very sad. Never was I very poor, neither my husband was illiterate. He owned good number of lands

er of lands



but lost everything in fighting against a legal case related to land. This loss was so shocking for him that he lost control of mental balance. People started to call him 'mad'. Everything has changed just after that. After struggling with severe hardship for couple of years he started begging. He left us 17 years ago and we don't even know if he is dead or alive.

At that time we were five of us in the family, including my two daughters, one son, myself and mother-in-law. From the little support of my in-laws and my family I managed to arrange marriage for my daughters. Then after finishing every penny I worked as domestic help for three years for making money. As income from domestic helping sometimes I got little amount of rice and at times there was nothing. Those days I used to collect very little amount of paddy from people and by boiling and preparing rice and selling those I somehow managed our food. From Islamic Relief I received 500 tk per month and with that money made my chicken farm and quit from searching job here and there. I don't need to work elsewhere now. Islamic Relief helped me a lot to make resources one by one.

I got chicken from you and now have 85 chickens including chicks. I sell eggs for 26tk/ quartet (hali). Everyday I'm making almost 80-100 tk from selling eggs. Now I'm making my living through these eggs and chicken. From your training, support and by my hard work I made this poultry farm. I tried to follow each of



your guidance all the time as best I can. From the very beginning I was strict enough saving money at least from selling of one or two eggs everyday in my clay bank. Very privately I am maintaining this clay bank. . From savings and profit from the egg sale I'll repair home and expand my poultry. I'm planning for a bigger poultry farm. I have 28 mother hens laying eggs. Now I'm processing 100 eggs for chicks. May Allah help me to have 100 healthy chickens from these 100 eggs. I'll make more money from those. I am planning for 100 hens which will give me at least 80 eggs/ day. This profit will help me to proceed if you are not here.

I am alone so its only me who takes care of my poultry from dawn to dusk. My only son lives in town for work.. Sometimes my nephew helps me at night. I do plan about my business and work on everything by myself with my money. My family members are very happy for my success. I know the value of information which you gave me in trainings and shomity meetings if I want to be happier. I consciously working on my intelligence and planning ways for my betterment. When I was working in

the rice mills as day labor, the rice husks in the rice mills gave me idea of having a cow which I bought before being the member. But to me poultry is more profitable than cow. I innovatively made room for both of my cows and chicken in the same old shed in consultation with the brothers of Islamic Relief. People are buying eggs from

me for starting poultry business inspired by me. They take eggs for processing chicks from them not for eating. Quality of the eggs are so good that none of them won't go wrong. They also ask for my suggestion for poultry rearing. You can't imagine how happy I am and how grateful I am to you!

.....

A day with Alema to see the changes after being member of HELP UP



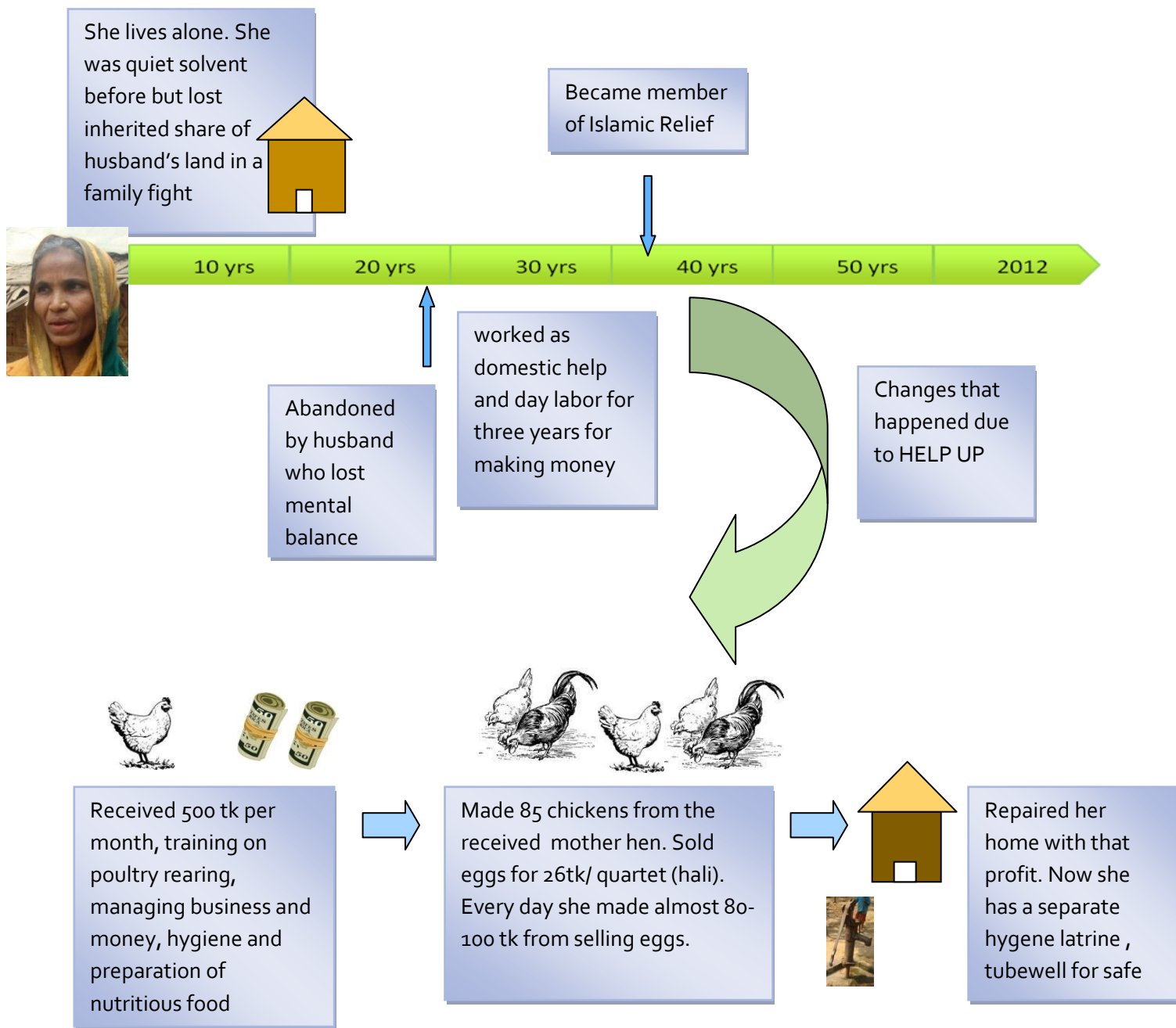
Alema Khatun's healthy hens with eggs in their nest.
They are feeding poultry feed provided by HELP UP.



Alema collecting healthy eggs from her poultry.
She is confident enough about the fertility of these healthy eggs.



Another room of her poultry farm where she processes eggs for fertilizing.
Baby chickens are feeding in the picture. This chicken processing part of the farm is very sensitive and she takes very well care of it all by herself.



Now I know Even I ALSO CAN DO

Lipi, ID# GKK 08471, 21 yrs, Kolkonda, Gangachara, Rangpur

I am Lipi. We are three in my family, my 2 years old son, husband and me. My husband lost his leg in a road accident in Dhaka in four and a half years back. Since then he is jobless. He used to be a rice merchant before. Now he is inactive and very ill. I used to work as domestic help and sometimes in fields as day labor. We were going through a very tough time. We used to starve for days, sometimes hardly could manage little food. Many a times three of us shared together the food for one. Then two years back I became a member of Islamic Relief by their survey.

I received tk 500 monthly from them and got total of Tk 9000 in 18 months. Received training on beef fattening. It was a four days long training. After training I received a bull for fattening. I also received medicine from them for my bull. I followed exactly the training and sold that bull

for 23000 tk and made a good profit. I bought another bull from that money and leased some land for cultivating vegetable. I sold that bull for 18000 tk. Again bought a bull and a goat. Then I sold that cow after 4 months for 21500 tk. From the savings and profit I also started chicken, duck and pigeon rearing. I am making profit by selling baby pigeons for 60 tk/ piece and duck eggs for 7tk/egg. This time I bought four decimals of land for 12000 tk for my home. I got that money from the savings from my goat, cow, chicken, duck and pigeons sale and the allowance from you. . I just had nothing before; not even any shed of my own to live but now I bought a land and set up my own home. I used to live in rented sheds before. I planted some fruits and vegetable in that rented land but I was not even allowed to consume that fruit and vegetables. Now this is my land. I also planted here some vegetables and will plant more soon. Now my family can have fruits and vegetable, can afford medical treatment for my husband. Though I do not have any one to help me in. I myself take care of everything from dawn to dusk. Now I have four decimals of land. Now I have a cow, 3 hens, 16 ducks, 2 goats and 10 pigeons.

I am planning for a big cow farm and a poultry farm of duck, chicken and pigeons. I am strong enough to do all these by myself. Cause Islamic Relief gave me the confidence that" even I also can do". I don't need to work elsewhere if I had cow, goat and poultry. Now people are very inspired for rearing pigeons after me. Now many people are rearing cow, goat and chicken. It gives me happiness that people are learning from me. My hard work will gift me good fortune.

Glimpse on the present belongings of very happy Lipi (who had just nothing before) which she has made with the support from the HELP UP project, funded by EC, and implemented by IRB



Fig: Lipi is feeding and cleaning her bull with a brush following guidance from the livestock training. She herself only



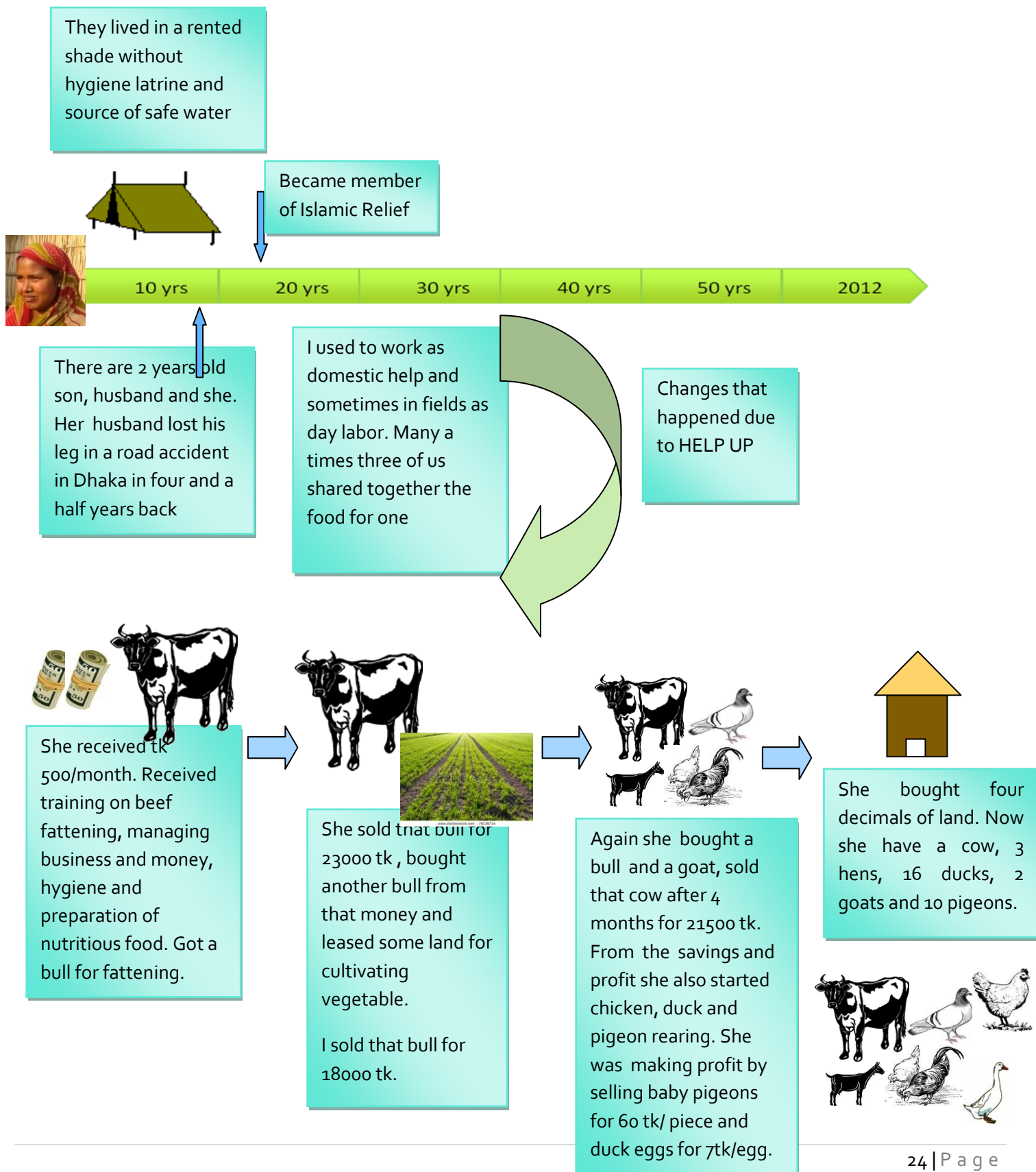
She is now the happy owner of this house which she bought from the profit from her duck and pigeons and also with the help of IRB allowance



Her pigeons and the pigeon nest (below the roof) Which is returning her a good profit and also inspiring others to try venture like this



Lipi's present bull. She is applying beef fattening method on it and will sell it couple of months later for a good profit.



Now I have my own money

Mosammat Khoyer Begum, Sadar, Gangachara, Rangpur

I am alone but now don't bother about that. I am happy the way I am. My husband has passed away 17/18 years ago. I have a son but he got married at his early age and lives elsewhere. He is a rickshaw puller and works very hard. I also let him to live alone without bothering me and lead a happy life with his spouse. His earning is too little. That is why also I preferred living alone without bothering him. No one was there for me ever to look after for. But I didn't mind. I accepted this reality. For living I tried many things. I used to work as domestic help, in the rice processing mills and also in the fields sometimes as day labor. I used to work the whole long day for money. My earning was very limited. It was a very hard time for me. Many a days I used to starve. I used to take meal whatsoever was available for me. I only had a piece



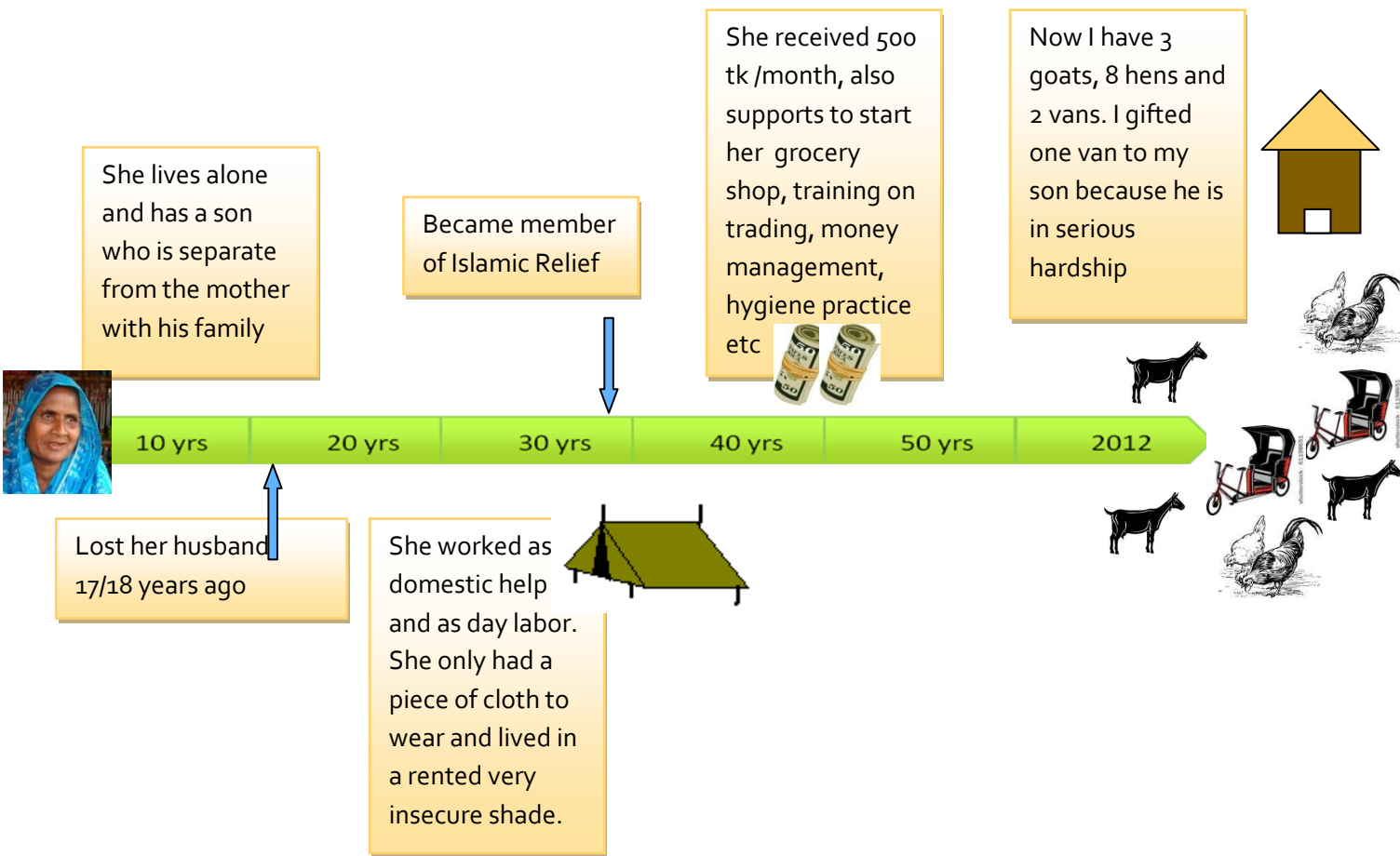
of cloth to wear. So I used to bathe and wash that cloth at nights so that people could not see me at dark while I was struggling with covering myself. I was very poor. There was only a shed to live in where I used to sleep after returning back home from hard work at night. I know that she was very insecure for me but I had no other choice but to live on the Mercy of the Almighty.

Islamic Relief selected me by a survey due to my severe situation. Then I became a member of Islamic Relief two years back. I received 500 tk monthly from them. I am a member there for two years. They gave me this shop. I received training on trading and learnt many things related to trading. This is my shop. I go to the wholesale market, pick and buy things, organize them in my shop and sell. I very minutely observe people's need and accordingly pick things from the wholesale market.. I don't want my customers to try other shops than me. This shop is my life, my home. From dusk to dawn I'm here in this shop.. For the last four months I am living in my shop. I made my arrangement to sleep in this shop Even I do pray 5 times in my shop, then I pull down the shop lid while praying. If someone comes he/she knows I'm praying and they then wait for me sitting on the bench in front. People know I am available anytime, whenever they come. Even in the dawns in their urgent need they come to me and wait till the shop opens. People come here not only for shopping but also to share with me. Neighboring women also come here to share and shop. We share many things with each other.

I am very happy now and I have money. Now I have 3 goats, 8 hens and 2 vans. I gifted one van to my son because he is in serious hardship. Before I had no idea about how a 500 taka note looks like. But now I am handling thousands of taka in these same two hands. I had nothing but now lending others money. I am planning to make my shop bigger and make available more things so that people don't need to go to the distant market for things. People will decide about my money after my death. But before that it's mine. I even say this to other women. Women should have their own money. When she'll have money she will have power to do many things without bothering others. It will save them from many calamities. I have learnt this from my life.



Fig: Khoyer in her grocery shop where she try her best to keep all the needed stuff for her community. This shop is her home, her kingdom. Infront of this shop there are two bamboo- made bench to sit on which buyers also share their life with her



I won't let any of my group members to beg or work as house maid ever

Mosammat Junia Khatun, Ramchondipur, Kursha



I, Mosammat Junia Khatun am the secretary of Nari Unnayan Shamity (VGDC group). I am 32 years old (as mentioned in my ID card). I have two children, a daughter and a son. My daughter is in class 9 and the son in class 5. Now I can write my name and also the address. I can talk to the Member (Union Parishad Member, representative from Local Government) and Vice Chairman of the locality sitting on a chair beside them. This was unimaginable before. Now I have created a space there. I take active part in the local trials regarding divorce, family fights etc representing the shamity invited by them. I follow equal gender balance



for both the sides during trial so that 'male side' cannot take any control over 'women side', to ensure justice for the girl. I am a girl and also know what a girl goes through during this. I also rescued a wife and her 3 children from her gambler and addicted husband. Her son got a good job of tk 2000/month. Now they can save 1000 tk/ month in Dhaka. I know the miseries of single women go through in her social life.

My life was unimaginably terrible before. You are looking at my house and my cow shed, thinking that how many resources I have. But these were not there even before three years ago. Piece by piece I set up all these. **From the selling of 4-6 eggs of my hen one day I bought some nuts and bolts for my home. Waited for another good time to buy other things and another day by selling some eggs I bought a stack of bamboo. Then waited again and I bought the corrugated iron roof. And finally set up this house on a fine day.** And people were surprised to see my house in a day. No one ever invited me in any occasion, and no one ever lent me even 10 taka, nor even did I receive 10 taka as zakat. This Junia had no home. My toilet was a fragile bamboo made one which was see through from outside, had no tube-well, single extra piece of cloth to wear. My husband left me 17 years back but I didn't get married. Upbringing my children were very hard for me but I managed well through my hard work and intelligence. I sacrificed my life for my children.

This Junia now have everything. I have cow, Six ducks, six hens, 2 goats; food in my home; have money, a home to live in; have educated children, 3 decimals of land. This land I inherited from my mother. From Islamic Relief I received a cow. Now I have a carrying cow and her healthy son I named Hridoy. I am hoping of making very good money through Hridoy. I made a separate space for my cow. I know how to take care of them and regularly I take care. Whenever I feel any wrong with these I knock the veterinary doctor instantly.



Figure: Her gold mine. she named it Hriday (means heart). it the healthy 1.5 years old calf from her mother cow which will be sold soon. This is already have created a good demand among the buyers and she is waiting the just profitable moment.

I got married at my young age. My inlaws asked for 2500tk as dowry but my parents managed only 1000tk. So my husband started beating me for the rest of the dowry. My husband was seriously involve in gambling. When my daughter was 1.5 years old then again I became pregnant with my son. When I was carrying for 6 months he sold every of his belongings and left us alone.

I started working as housemaid, did whatsoever were available to me. When my son was 6 months old I started working in the rice husking job (chatal). Every 3 or 4 days by carrying 40 sacks full of rice with my son tied on my back, I used to get 700-800 tk. I lost my hair due to carrying so much of weight on my head for all these years. I made 10 hens, some ducks, goat from the money of my hard work. I used to save money in a clay bank every day.

I got immense help from Islamic Relief. I picked up the way Sisters from Islamic Relief communicates and got the instant result. People started to respect me because of my better language. I always have seen that nothing comes without give and take. It moved me a lot when I came to know that Brothers of Islamic Relief would give us so many things without asking any single thing in return from us. Now I can write. Now I can talk to the Union Chairman. The shomity meetings, trainings changed me a lot. I managed to include 10 shamity members in the government's cash for work programme after repeatedly strong communication with the Union

Chairman. With wonder, the Chairman asked from where I learnt speaking like this and I replied from Islamic Relief.

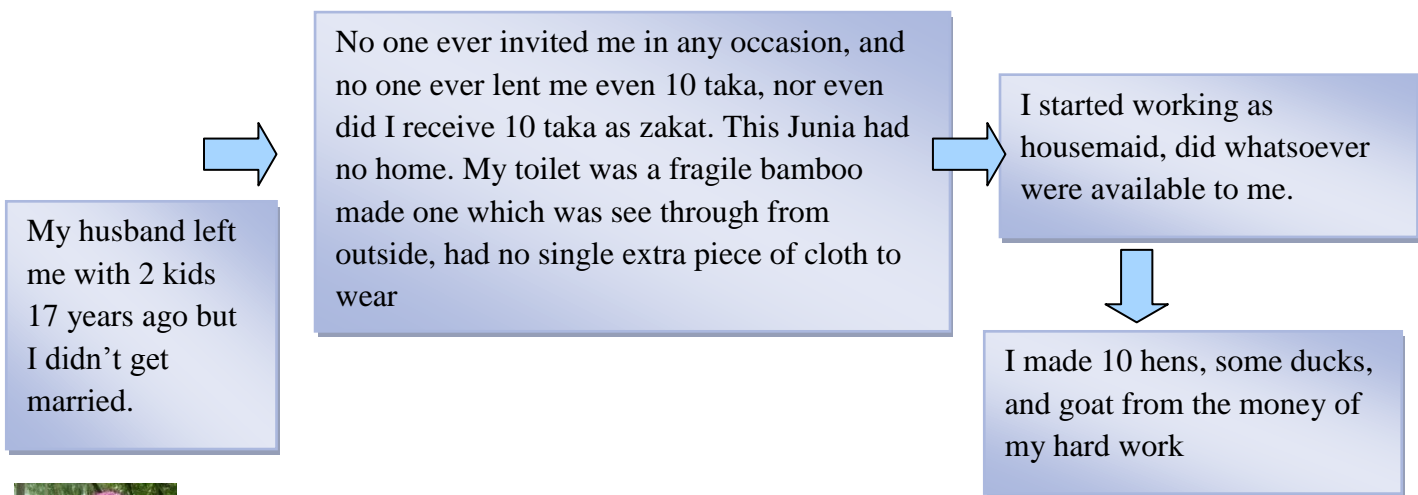


Figure: The recently bought mosquito net and a plastic shelf are managed by selling her share of eggs from the regular meals which she sold without consuming.

As group IGA we leased 27 decimals of land for two groups for 65000 tk. We will take the rice in harvest and. The remainder part will be used as fodder. Whatever the total quantity would be we will sell the rice in group. We have our 10000 tk savings in the bank and after rice sale we will invest in vegetable cultivation. From this cultivation we can make profit of minimum.5000 tk. **We are planning to become rich collectively not individually.** I will teach this group process to my children and they will continue when I am not capable to do so. **Now I am planning of an office room for our shamity where I can bring the Chairman and bargain on our demands.** I am teaching my neighbors about taking care of cows and diagnosis ways of animal diseases.

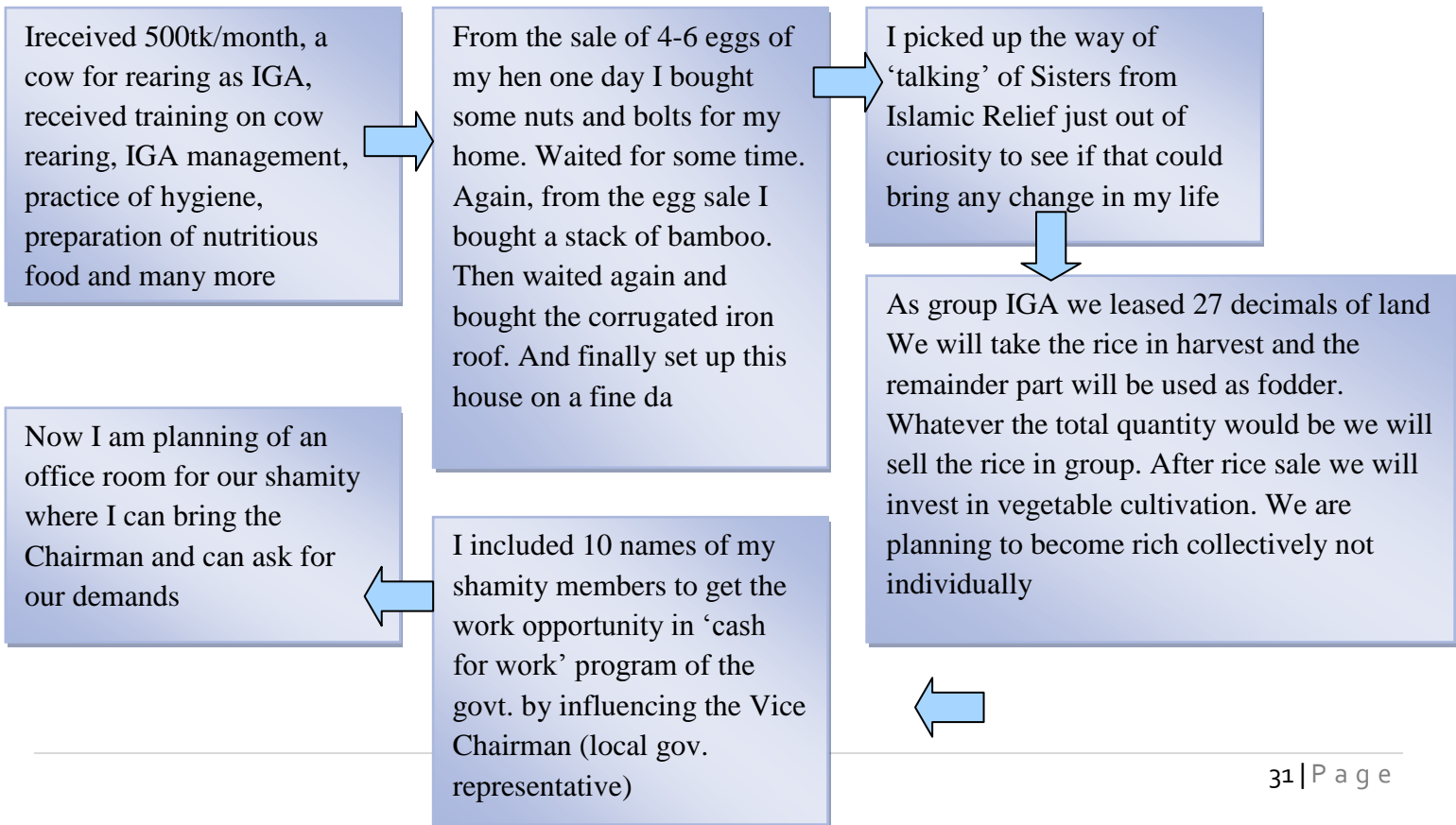
I know all our group members are not equally competent enough to receive learning. But I am preparing them. I teach them how to talk to the persons like Chairman. I also teach them many learning from the training which I received. People sometimes make fun of me. But I don't care. I will keep teaching my members my learning and also those what they don't know or can't do. **I won't let any of my members to beg or work as house maid ever. I am a banyan tree now and will make many trees like me as long as I am alive.**

Life changing path of Junia through HELPUP



Glimpse of Junia - before HELP UP

Glimpse of Junia - NOW



We will be the leaders like banana tree that produces another young tree before it dies not like the banyan tree which don't let other trees to grow.

Mosammat Dulali Begum, 41 years



I am the secretary of the shamity. I got married to Mosabber Hossain in 1985 when was 14 years old. He makes living with whatever-whenver is available. I have a happy family with four children; two daughters and two sons. Now I realize the mistake of having four children in a poor family. My sons work in garments industry in town but I was strict about the education of my daughters. I never went to school and that is my regret of life. So I don't want my daughters to suffer the same like me. My elder daughter is studying at the HSC level.

We, the mother and daughter are just friends. We talk on any issue with each other. I wished if my mother could also be my friend. I give my daughter some

pocket money to buy her goodies. But I also make queries whenever any new addition in her belongings catches my attention. In this way she is under my monitoring. My only heartfelt regret is I did not get the opportunity to study at least to the primary level.

I know I have changed a lot from before after being part of HELPUP. I could never think like this, neither was so confident, was scared of talking to the power holders. But now am confident in communicating people, learnt many a things of which I have never heard of, also learnt about women rights from the trainings. Because of my confidence even people don't believe that I was never been in school.

I have four decimals of inherited land. I came here because of a family fight with my in-laws after staying with them for 16 years. My father was a fish wholesaler. On this four decimal of land I have a separate kitchen, a room for my daughter, a separate room for cow and goats, a latrine, a tube-well, and another room for us.

These all are because of Islamic Relief. My condition 3.5 years back was not like this good. This home which you are now looking at was not there. It was a plastic covered small shed. There was no separate arrangement of living for us before.



Figure 1 Dulali's resource, her calf which she will sell after rearing and fattening learnt from the HELP UP trainings

I received 9000 taka in total from Help Up by saving 500 tk per month and I got this money for 18 months. With that



money I bought ducks and hens, paid school fees for my kids spent on my family and set up this home. I also got a cow from them for fattening. I sold that cow and with that money I leased a land for 26000 tk for rice cultivation. This money I managed from the cow sale, savings from Help Up and also from my sons' and husband's contribution. I am hoping to get approximate 8 mounds of rice worth taka 48000 in this harvest.

I am confident about this shamity without any support from Help Up. Because like a baby we nurtured it, took care of it and now this baby has started walking and it would run in the near future. I have learnt concept of nutritious khichuri from Help Up and we take this meal quiet often. Though I was very conscious about many things

but even I didn't wear sandals for latrine but now my family does. I just love the issues we shared in our trainings, meetings, gatherings etc. These helped me a lot to learn so many things about life even without attending school. I am so happy. HELP UP has gifted us a new life.



Figure 2 (at left). Reserve of fuel sticks and household utensil at the lower level this is at the side of her bedroom where the room is also shared by her cow. and (at right) Dulali's separate kitchen room. Though poverty is visible everywhere but still notable is its cleanliness with a mud floor during monsoon.

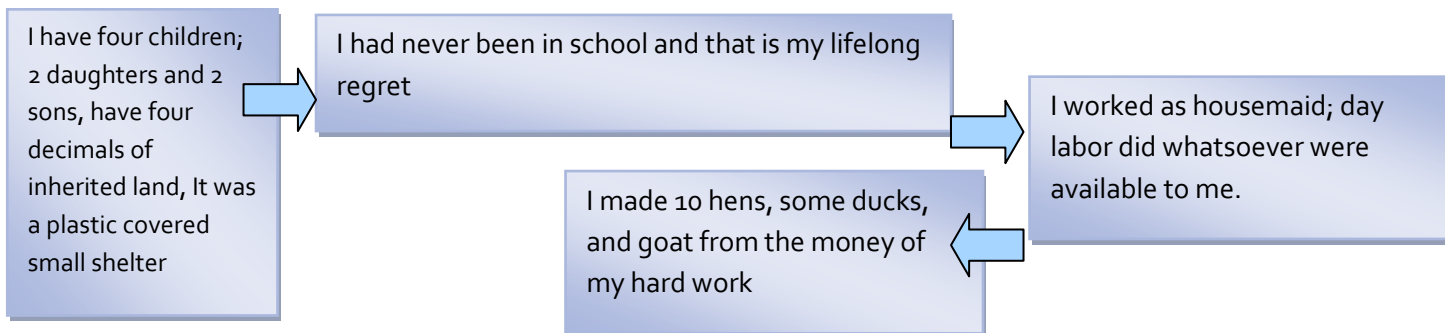
It feels happy that all the members are doing well now from before. They encourage me a lot to do things for them. Whenever information comes to me about difficulties of carrying mothers I rush to her, observe the situation and refer them immediately to the hospital. Whenever someone is in trouble they just rush to me for solution. I proposed a list for government's allowance for widow scheme from our community to the Chairperson consulting our group members. He has to take it seriously because my list was too transparent and accurate. He has assured me to issue the widow allowance card to all of my listed seven persons. Now I am confident enough to visit the local elected bodies and talk to them. I also have a good relation with the chairperson of the department of Women Affairs. I also resolved a domestic fight where the wife was left in her parents' for some time due to a family fight and husband was not inclined to take

her back. I also managed tuition allowance for 15-20 students from my community till now; also facilitate people to go for casting vote.

We should have that confident and knowledge to communicate people. I tell my shamity that we will create a group like honey bees. Our group will be a model for others. We will be the leaders like banana tree that produces another young tree before it dies not like the banyan tree which don't let other trees to grow.

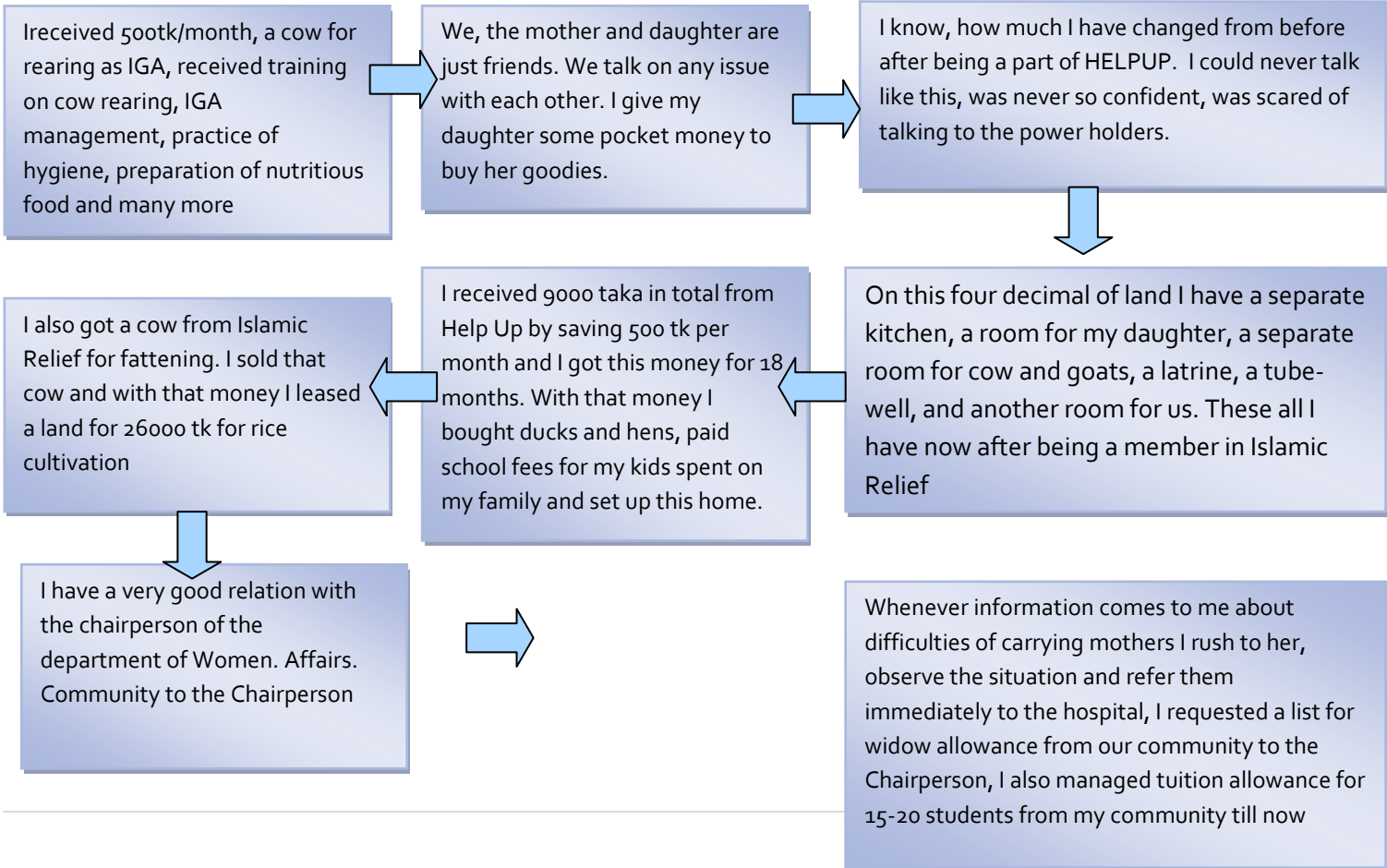
.....

Life changing path of Dulali Begum through HELPUP



Glimpse of Dulali - before HELP UP

Glimpse of Dulali - NOW



Acknowledgement:

This success is the result of enormous hard work and heartfelt immersion with the target group of All the relevant respected project people of IR area office and IR country office for three years nine months. Thanks to the Project Manager and Regional Program Coordinator for their support in developing the stories. And special thanks to the Respected Country Director for his guidance and support in designing this collective stories.

.....

Disclaimer

“This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Islamic Relief Worldwide and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.”