

A woman wearing a light-colored headscarf with a dark patterned band is shown from the chest up. She is holding a large, dark, woven basket high above her head, and a large quantity of bright orange, irregularly shaped grains are falling from it, creating a dynamic, cascading effect. The background is a plain, light color.

FOOD SECURITY ON THE CHARS

CLP IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY SERIES



Chars Livelihoods Programme

Reducing Extreme Poverty on the Riverine Islands of North West Bangladesh

FOOD SECURITY ON THE CHARS

The CLP's Contribution



What is Food Security?

The 1996 World Food Summit defined food security as existing when “all people, at all times, have sufficient, safe and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”. CLP defines food security under the following three pillars:

Food Utilisation

Consumed food must have positive nutritional impact on people.

Food Availability

Food must be available in sufficient quantities on a consistent basis.

Food Access

Households must be able to regularly acquire adequate amounts of food.



How Does CLP Measure Food Security?

CLP's Innovation, Monitoring, Learning and Communications Division (IMLC) is largely responsible for M&E and research which includes assessing progress towards high level results. These results areas have been grouped into themes that include livelihoods, food security, nutrition, women's empowerment, graduation and water, sanitation and hygiene.

The Programme aims to provide 78,000 extreme poor households with an integrated package of support lasting 18 months. Because not all of these households can be supported at the same time, six groups (called cohorts) therefore receive the package through annual cohorts averaging 13,000 core participant households (CPHHs).

IMLC collects the baseline status of households prior to them receiving CLP's support. This normally takes place during October each year. At the same time, data is collected from a sample of households from previous cohorts which allows the programme to show impact and whether outcomes/ impacts have been sustainable over time. The baseline status of each new cohort acts as the control group for all previous cohorts.



CLP's Food Security Interventions

The CLP aims to improve the food security of households through a combination of direct and indirect interventions. Activities include:

- Providing an income-generating asset, which can become the basis of a sustainable livelihood;
- Promoting homestead gardening which increases the availability of nutritious vegetables and can provide an additional source of income;
- Increasing access to an improved water source and sanitary latrines;
- Building awareness on nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene issues;
- Providing counselling on food preparation, hygiene issues etc.
- Providing cash for work and safety nets for households during the lean season.





Variety is the spice of life—Sahahinar's story

Sahahinar has used the support given by CLP to invest in a variety of income generating assets including chili-growing, cattle and fruit tree production.

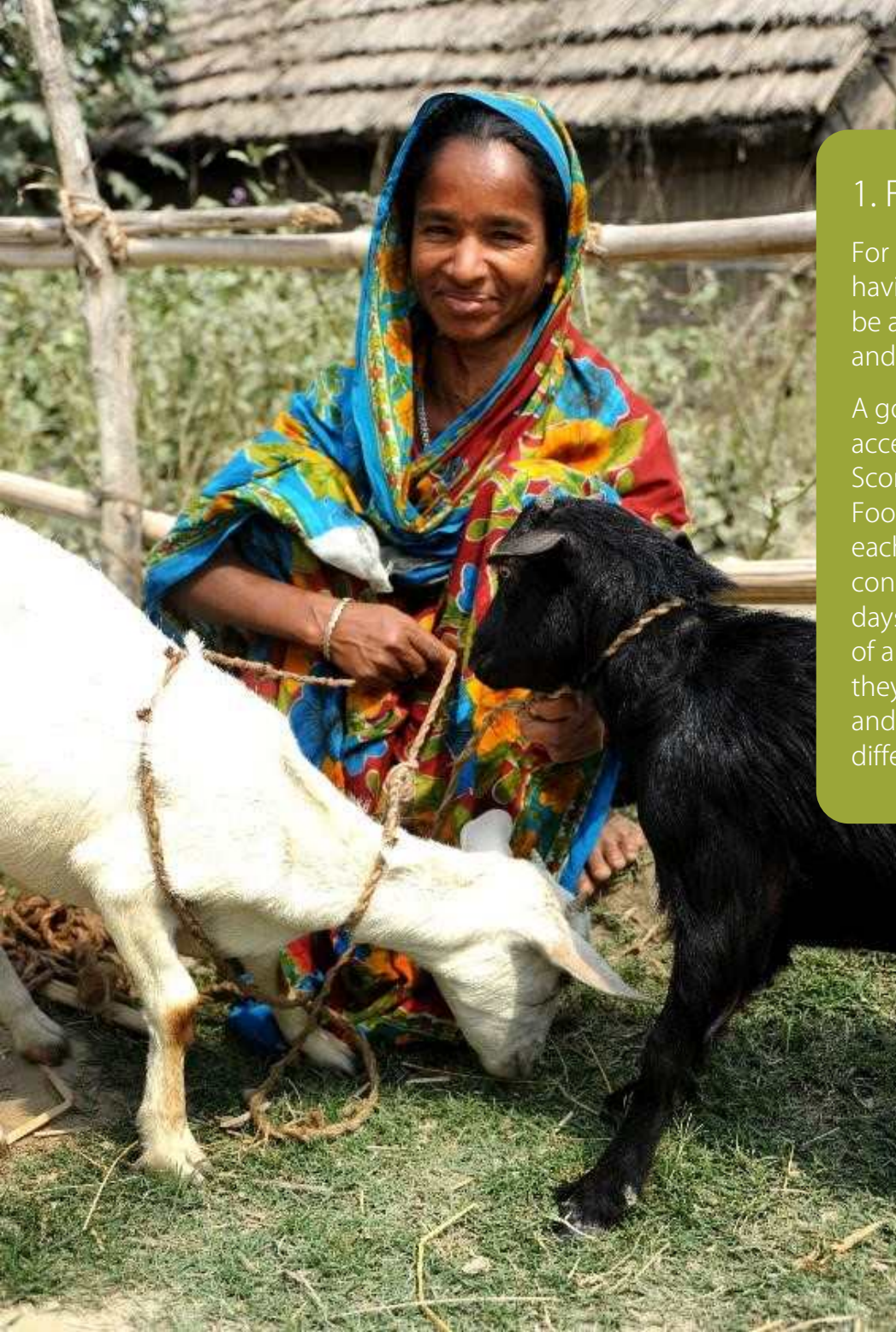
Prior to receiving CLP support, Sahahinar and her husband had been labourers, struggling to earn enough to feed their family. In 2011, CLP selected them as a core household and gave them an opportunity to turn their lives around.

She selected a heifer as her income-generating asset. Using the skills learnt during the livelihoods training supplied by CLP, she nurtured the cow and then sold it, making a good profit. She then reinvested in more cows and, at the same time, cared for her homestead garden. With these two incomes, she was able to feed her family as well as save enough to invest in some land.

Sahahinar leased a third of an acre of land to grow chilies, and in just three months she had cultivated over TK 30,000 (£248) worth. On top of this, she also rented an acre of land where she grows banana trees with pumpkins growing around their bases, a technique learnt by attending CLP Social Development group meetings. In this season alone, she and her husband were able to grow over four hundred sizeable pumpkins.

"It is development. Earlier I could not afford fish or meat, now I can have it every day! Before I was not invited to social occasions...now I am socially accepted."

In the future Sahahinar is planning to buy her own land and get her children to complete school so they do not have to be labourers like their parents once were. The use of different incomes to generate wealth means she can always afford to buy enough food for her family even when different shocks and stresses occur.



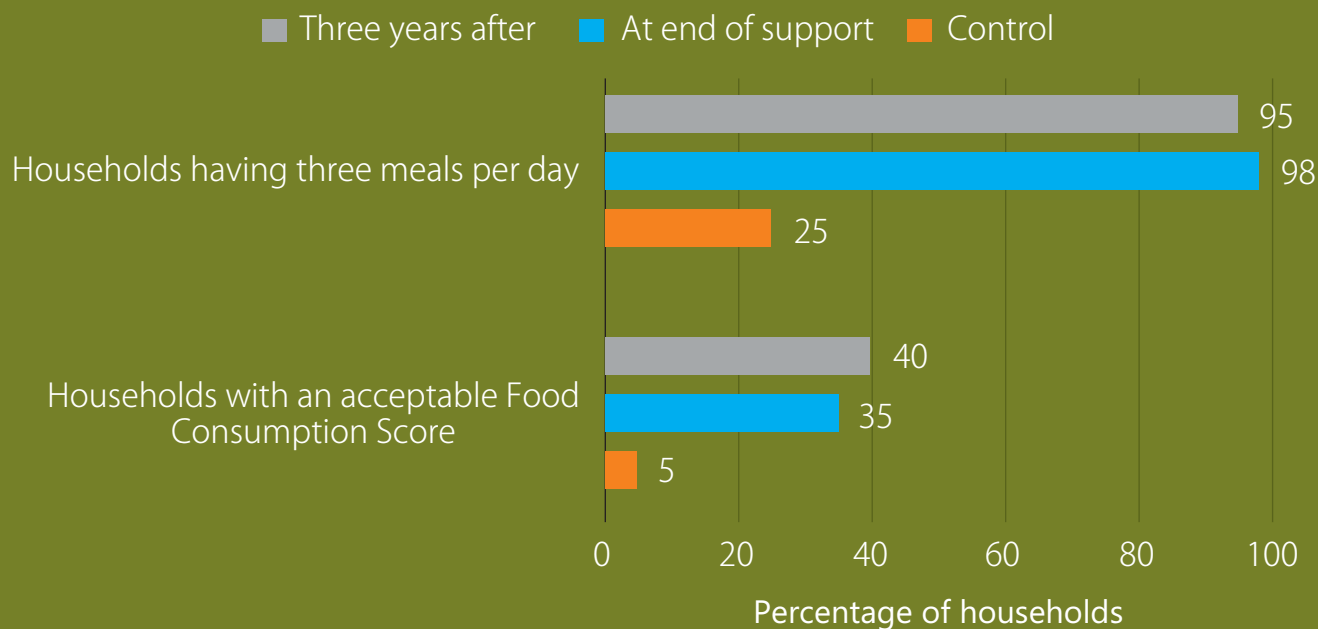
1. Food Access

For households to be seen as having 'access to food' they must be able to acquire food regularly and in adequate amounts.

A good indicator related to food access is the Food Consumption Score¹ (FCS) created by the World Food Programme. This scores each individual household's food consumption in the last seven days, incorporating the diversity of a household's diet, how often they ate different types of food, and the nutritional value of different foods.

¹ The score is calculated by multiplying the frequency of foods consumed in the last week with a weight applied to each food group, as determined by the World Food Programme. Scores are then matched against three pre-established categories; 1. Poor food consumption (<28); 2. Borderline food consumption (28-42); and 3. Acceptable food consumption (>42).

CLP'S IMPACT ON FOOD ACCES



Source: 2012 and 2013 Surveys

CLP has not only a positive impact on the food consumption scores of households, but this impact sustains after CLP support ends.

CLP also has a major impact on the number of meals a day that households eat.

Spending more than 70% of household income on food is a strong indication that food access for a given household is difficult. CLP surveys from 2012 and 2013 showed that the proportion of households spending 70% of income on food dropped from 73% before receiving the CLP support package to 27.1% thereafter.

2. Food Availability

Food availability increases for households on the chars after they receive support from CLP.

After receiving CLP support, 93% of households have cattle (compared with 12% of control group households) -thereby increasing their access to meat and dairy products - as well as an income to buy food.

Of those households who received CLP support in 2011/2012 (Cohort 2.3), it was found in the 2013 survey (four months after the end of support) that many of these households (30%) had since opted to invest in land, creating other livelihoods' strategies and sources of food and income.

The more types of food sources households have, the greater their food stability and resilience to future shocks and stresses.







3. Food Utilisation

Food utilisation is the third pillar of food security and refers to appropriate food preparation, largely focusing on households' Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) practices.

WASH is crucial to how households can use food to maximise their nutritional value. Compared to the control group, CLP households who have received the CLP support package:

- **Hand wash more with soap/ash at critical times;** 5% in control group (cohort 2.4) in 2012 to 70% in 2013 amongst the same cohort after receiving CLP support
- **Have greater access to sanitary latrines** (up to CLP standards); In 2012, the control group has just over 40% of HHs with access to a sanitary latrine but this figure jumps to almost 90% in 2013.
- **Have greater access to tube wells** (up to CLP standards); 1.5% in control group (cohort 2.4) in 2012 to 46% in 2013 amongst the same cohort after receiving CLP support.







JAHANARA RULES THE ROOST

Jahanara has lifted herself out of poverty by rearing chickens. With over 95% of CLP participants focusing on cattle as their income-generating activity, Jahanara and her chickens are an unusual case. With part of her CLP asset grant, she purchased one cockerel and ten hens. She now has grown this initial asset to over 40 chickens, and has now even purchased some ducks.

Jahanara's choice to pursue a livelihood rearing poultry was carefully thought out. During 2011, CLP's Markets and Livelihoods unit were working

to improve poultry rearing technology. Jahanara heard of the potential gains from this approach and wanted to get involved. During her time in the CLP she attended poultry-rearing meetings where she learnt about poultry feed, vaccinations, early separation methods and other information on how to maximise returns in poultry-rearing.

With this new found knowledge she built a hut for her chickens and began to expand her roost. From selling chickens she was able to earn Tk. 13,000 (around £105) in her first year as well as getting Tk. 700 (£5.60) each month from the eggs that were laid.

Complementing her income from chickens, she also grew vegetables in her garden, earning Tk. 12,500 (£101) in her first year. The profit she made in her first year enabled Jahanara to build a house for her family to live in and ensure they now eat a healthy diet with a combination of chicken and vegetables.

Jahanara's new livelihood has had wider impacts on her family. She has a son and a daughter who she supports. Her son has recently graduated from high school with high grades which is an incredible achievement considering Jahanara herself had no schooling. Her ambition now is to earn enough income from her assets to send her son to university, a dream unimaginable before receiving CLP support.



The Chars Livelihoods Programme works with extreme-poor households living on island chars in north west Bangladesh. The Programme aims to improve the livelihoods, incomes and food security of at least one million extremely poor and vulnerable women, children and men living on chars. CLP provides a package of interventions with the aim of improving social and economic assets, reducing environmental and economic risks, and increasing access to markets and services. CLP is jointly funded by UK aid through the Department for International Development and the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. CLP is sponsored by the Rural Development and Co-operatives Division of the Government of Bangladesh's Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives, and implemented through Maxwell Stamp Plc.

For further information on the CLP's impact on women's empowerment, please visit the Publication page of our website. The most relevant documents are:

Barrett, A; Hannan, M., and Alam, Z.(2014) The Security, Stability and Sustainability of Food on the Chars. Chars Livelihoods Programme.

Cordier, L., Kenward, S., and Islam, R. (2012) A Study to Assess the Outcomes of the CLP on Food Security. Chars Livelihoods Programme.

Cordier, L. (2012) Review of the CLP's Approach to Monitoring Food Security. Chars Livelihoods Programme.

This brief is part of the CLP's Impact and Sustainability Series, which outline the CLP's impact and sustainability across the programmes five key thematic areas. Forthcoming briefs in this series will address Women's Empowerment, Livelihoods and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).



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Chars Livelihoods Programme

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