



IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS ON THE CHARS

CLP IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY SERIES



Chars Livelihoods Programme

Reducing Extreme Poverty on the Riverine Islands of North West Bangladesh



IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS ON THE CHARS

The CLP's Contribution

Livelihoods on the chars

Prior to receiving CLP support, the primary occupation for approximately 69% of households is day labour (mainly in agriculture).

Day labour is poorly paid, unpredictable and is vulnerable to seasonal effects.





How the CLP Addresses Livelihoods Issues

The primary way CLP works to improve household livelihoods is by providing a grant to each core participant when they join the Programme. With this grant, participants invest in an asset of their choice. The majority, around 98%, choose to purchase cattle. Other households invest in land, sewing machines, rickshaws, or start a small business such as a shop.

The CLP provides livestock training and a monthly stipend for 18 months.

This is coupled with further interventions that protect and transform participants' livelihoods including:

- The provision of a tube well and sanitary latrine, along with water, sanitation and hygiene training;
- Access to village, savings and loans groups;
- Raising homesteads on plinths above the highest known flood level;
- Providing access to healthcare and nutrition education; and
- Providing homestead gardening inputs and training.

How Does CLP Measure Livelihoods Impacts?

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.

One way to measure poverty is to look at mean household income, per person per day (pppd). However, using this information in isolation can oversimplify the situation on the chars.

As such, CLP measures its impact on livelihoods and the sustainability of impact by looking at a range of indicators, including:

- The value of household productive assets;
- Diversification of income sources;
- Household income pppd;
- Household expenditure pppd and consumption expenditure;
- Proportion of income spent on food; and
- Household cash savings.



A woman wearing a vibrant orange and blue patterned sari and a matching headscarf is feeding a brown cow with a white face. She is holding a large, shallow, woven basket filled with green and yellow grass, pouring it into a concrete feeding trough. The cow is standing in the trough, eating the feed. The background shows a rustic enclosure made of bamboo poles and a fence of vertical bamboo sticks. The scene is set outdoors with lush green trees in the background.

Value of Household Productive Assets

CLP has a significant impact on the value of households' productive assets;

Before joining CLP, average productive asset values are Tk. 1,675 (around £14).

This increases substantially to an average of Tk. 51,626 (around £430) for households at the end of the 18 month cycle of support. This value continues to increase over time on average for core participant households.



Household Income and expenditure

CLP has a significant impact on household income and expenditure.

Average household income (per person per day) for households that recently completed CLP is much higher (Tk. 50.4; around £0.42) than households in the control group (Tk 19.5; around £0.16).

Similar to income, average household expenditure pppd, is much higher for households that recently completed CLP (Tk. 41.5; around £0.35) compared to households in the control group (Tk. 20.2; around £0.17).

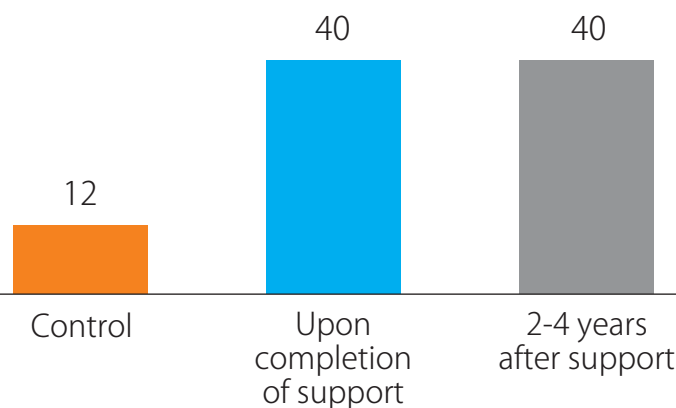
For all cohorts, the largest proportion of household expenditure goes on food. This is much greater for households that have not participated in CLP (75.4% of income) than for households that have recently completed the Programme (46.8%). During this time the proportion of income spent on investment and on household items such as clothing, fuel for cooking and lighting increases.



Diversification of Income Sources

CLP has a positive impact on the range of income sources. Having more than one income source increases a household's resilience to shocks, as well as providing the household with more options when agricultural day labour, the main source of income, is unavailable or in short supply.

DIVERSIFICATION OF INCOME SOURCES



HOUSE HOLDS WITH MORE THAN ONE INCOME SOURCE

Source: 2013 Survey

Prior to joining CLP, the main income source of income is day labour for the majority of households. Once households begin participating in CLP, although day labour remains the largest component of household income, there is a positive trend towards income generated from livestock and agricultural production.



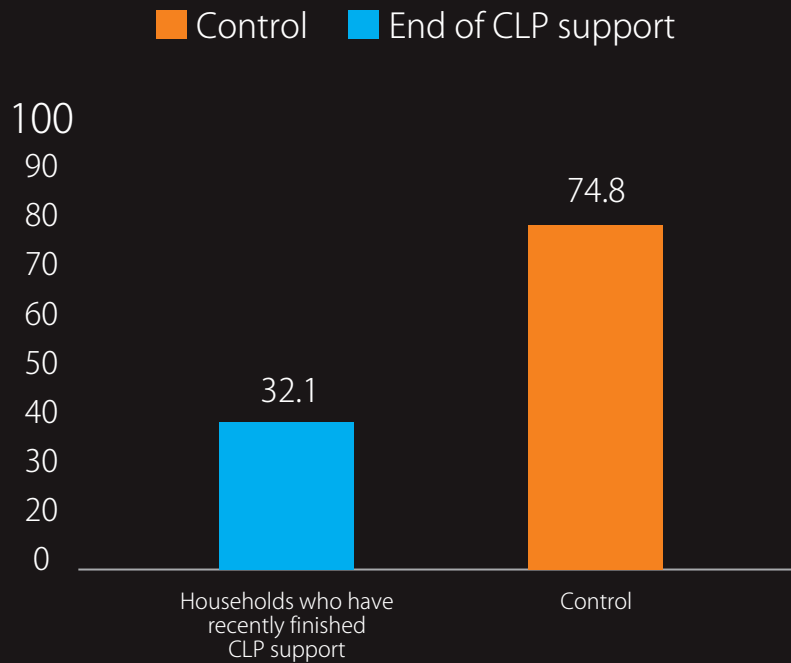
Proportion of Income Spent on Food

A key objective of CLP is to increase the food security of households it works with by ensuring that participants have greater income to spend on food, as well as decreasing the proportion of income spent on food.

This allows households to spend money in other areas such as education, healthcare or investment. The amount of money households spend on food increases as a result of participation in CLP and this is seen to sustain after households leave the Programme.

In line with measures suggested by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), CLP views households that spend more than 70% of their income on food as being vulnerable to food insecurity.

HOUSEHOLDS THAT SPEND OVER 70% OF INCOME ON FOOD



Results show that an average of 74.8% of households who are not participating in CLP spend over 70% of their income on food, compared to an average of just 32.1% of households who have recently left the Programme.

As households start spending a smaller proportion of their income on food, they begin to spend more money on investment and household items.





Household Cash Savings

Extreme-poor char-dwellers often live day-to-day, hand-to-mouth and therefore participants join CLP with little or no cash savings.

Without financial safety nets char-dwellers are more vulnerable to external shocks which can have a negative impact on their livelihoods.

CLP has a large, positive impact on household cash savings;

Comparing households who are not participating in CLP with those who have recently completed the Programme, household cash savings increase significantly from an average of Tk. 128.7 (around £1) to an average of Tk. 3,354.9 (around £28).

Further, average household cash savings continue to increase in the years after households have completed CLP.



FIROZA'S STORY

Firoza joined CLP in 2006. She and her husband chose to spend the grant they received from CLP on a cow and a mosquito net to protect the animal. After purchasing her cow, Firoza received livestock training from CLP and a monthly stipend to help her raise it.

Three months after purchasing, her cow became pregnant and gave birth. After giving birth, her cow produced five litres of milk per day. In early 2013, Firoza sold this cow and two calves.

With the money she made from this sale, along with her savings, she purchased a much larger cow which produces significantly higher milk yields.

With the five cows she now owns, Firoza gets 18 litres of milk per day which she sells in the nearest village, Rawmari, about 4km away.

With her savings, she has also invested in a third of an acre of land on which she grows fodder, rice and jute.

Firoza's husband used to be a day labourer. Firoza says, "Now my husband does not need to work for others, he can work from his home."

Firoza's story demonstrates how an asset, combined with training, can impact a participant's livelihood in a sustainable way, leading to an increase in and diversification of income.

SANWARA'S STORY

Sanwara joined CLP in 2011. Realising the potential benefits of tailoring, she purchased a sewing machine with the money from CLP's grant. Sanwara was aware that all the villagers on her char had to travel to the nearest town to purchase clothes. As such, she knew that there would be a continual demand for her products; and there was.

Sanwara and her husband Bokul are now earning a good income. During the two Eid festivals, in 2012, they earned an additional Tk. 110,000 (around £917).

From the profit that she and Bokul make from tailoring, they have purchased a cow which, over time, has doubled in value and is now worth Tk. 15,000 (around £125).

They have re-invested in their house and rebuilt it out of tin instead of jute straw.

Not only do they run a successful business, they also train new CLP participants in the sewing trade.

"We are very comfortable now," Sanwara says. "Our health is good and now I can afford to buy meat for our family."





The Chars Livelihoods Programme works with extreme-poor households living on is land 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 CLP's impact on livelihoods, please visit the Publications page of CLP's website. The most relevant documents are:

Haneef, C., Kenward, S., Hannan, M. and Alam, Z. (2014). CLP's Impact on Livelihoods on The Chars and its Sustainability. Chars Livelihoods Programme.

Barrett, A.T., McIntosh, R.A., Pritchard, M., Hannan, H., Alam, Z. and Marks, M. (2013). Asset Values: Why are some households doing better than others? Chars Livelihoods Programme.

Blackie, R., and Alam, Z. (2012) Review of Income and Expenditure among CLP Core Participant Households. Chars Livelihoods Programme.

Blackie, R. and Alam, Z. (2012). Review of the Value and Composition of Assets Owned by CLP Core Participant Households. Chars Livelihoods Programme.

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



September 2012

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Chars Livelihoods Programme

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January 2015



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