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PARTICIPANT BASED SURVEY

SHOUHARDO III Plus

2024

CARE BANGLADESH

Strengthening Household Ability to Respond
to Development Opportunities III Plus Activity
(SHOUHARDO III Plus)



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Acknowledgement

Data Management Aid's (DMA's) efforts, with the assistance of Albaabur Rahman, external consultant, as Team Leader, bore fruit with the successful completion of the Participants Based Survey (PaBS) in the year 2024. However, there are many others who share the reward of this effort simply because it would never have been this good without their help. DMA acknowledges the cooperation and encouragement of the SHOUHARDO III Plus team. It was their endless support and actions that helped the DMA to conclude the PaBS in 2024. DMA appreciates how program staff took quick initiatives to address the needs and challenges that could prohibitively impact the survey's execution. Some of the program staff went above and beyond to ensure the quality and completeness of PaBS 2024 including Biswajit Banik, Zakiruzzaman, Firoz Alom and Al Amin Islam from CARE Bangladesh. It is essential to note the DMA team received continuous guidance and support from Abdul Mannan Mazumder, the acting Chief of Party, and Eyasin Ali Sarker, Senior Team Leader, Monitoring and Evaluation of SHOUHARDO III Plus activity while conducting this survey.

DMA is greatly indebted to the SHOUHARDO III Plus staff who facilitated the process of ensuring all the logistics. DMA would also like to extend its gratitude to SHOUHARDO III Plus implementing partners who provided all support to the data collection teams to complete their work smoothly.

Finally, DMA is thankful to the survey respondents for their patience, time, and dedication while responding to the survey questions. Their welcoming attitude and willingness to share invaluable information made the survey possible.

DMA Team



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List of Acronyms

AI	Artificial Insemination
ANC	Ante-Natal Care
BSP	Blue Star Provider
CO	Collector (Produce)
COG	Core Operational Group
FFH	Fish Fry Hawker
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Fiscal Year
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GMP	Growth Monitoring and Promotion Service
HA	Health Agent(s) – includes PCSBA and BSP LSPs
HH	Household
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IR	Intermediate Result
KII	Key Informant Interview
LSP	Local Service Provider
MCHN	Mother and Child Health and Nutrition
MDD	Minimum Dietary Diversity
MMF	Minimum Meal Frequency
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PaBS	Participant Based Survey
PCSBA	Private Community Skilled Birth Attendants
PEP	Poor and Extreme Poor
SA	Seed Agent
SHOUHARDO III Plus	Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities III Plus
SS	Sanchay Sathi/Village Agent (VSLA)
ULO	Upazila Livestock Officer
UP	Union Parishad
USG	United States Government
VDC	Village Development Committee
VX	Vaccinator (Livestock)
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO) III Plus is a two-year Activity (2022-2024, extended to January 2025), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Activity aims to improve food security, resilience, and income for 168,521 Poor and Extreme Poor (PEP) households in Bangladesh's remote Char and deep Haor regions. Focusing on income diversification, sustainable agriculture, market access, financial services, and nutrition, the activity emphasizes gender equity, governance, disaster risk reduction, environmental considerations, and private sector engagement to maximize impact. This includes the continuation of engaging and linking the program-facilitated Local Service Providers (LSP) with the government and private sector, as well as promoting increased consumption of nutritious foods and micro-nutrients for children under five years of age, pregnant and lactating women, and adolescent girls. Project intervention areas include 4 districts (Kurigram, Gaibandha, Sirajganj and Jamalpur) in the Char region and 4 districts (Netrokona, Kishoreganj, Habiganj and Sunamganj) in the Haor region.

Goal and Impacts

The SHOUHARDO III Plus Theory of change posited the goal of improved gender equitable food and nutrition security and resilience of the vulnerable people living in the Char and Haor in Bangladesh driven by 2 intermediate results: one in equitable access to income and nutritious food and the other in improved sustained nutritional status of children under 5, pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls. Achievements in the first result is based on 11 indicators around agriculture production, income, enabling support and services, market access and empowerment.

The resilience focused single goal-level complex composite index indicator RESIL-a , the ability to recover from 16 types of shocks and stresses [ZOI-level] scored 4.96 (out of a maximum of 6). This result is supported by a Bonding Social Capital Index of 72% and a Bridging Social Capital Index of 67%. Resilience improved over the last year, despite persistent inflation, natural disasters and economic instability. Considering the magnitude of external and contextual shocks and stresses on the people living in Char and Haor, the continued increase in resilience is a positive indicator that the project impact group is poised to reach sustainable graduation out of food and nutrition insecurity. Despite food expenses rising by 1.5 times over the project period, 54% of PEP remained food secure, while children [6-23 months] receiving the minimum meal frequency doubled in a year [33% to 66%] with gender parity [M:64%, F:67%]. These positive changes despite protracted challenges are the legacy of the sustained impact of SHOUHARDO. Adult women had higher resilience (5) than Male (4.85) among the target impact group, indicating LSP contribution in encouraging income generating agri-production for women increasing both household food supply and income.

In agriculture, LSP-backed crops [vegetables, rice and livestock (goats)] achieved sales growth, adoption of improved practices and increased yield, exceeding target. The contribution of LSP to these positive changes was recognized by the community, government institutions and private sector actors. Seed agents, vaccinators and collectors were perceived to be the most impactful. Despite increases in yield and total production, increased income was constrained by prolonged inflation, particularly food price inflation leaving about half with unchanged income. Market and services access can be one of the highlights of the project as 93% could access markets, 72% received LSP services and 86% accessed market information. All these changes indicate the strong role of collectors in the community.

In Health [nutritional status], adopting positive health behaviors like diet of minimum diversity, extra care during pregnancy, and targeted public and private services, all achieved or exceeded targets; with the role of P-CSBAs being highly appreciated, particularly in mainstreaming nutrition in the community.



Achievements Highlights	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women exceed men in resilience score • 99% of farmers adopted 3 improved techniques/technologies • 93% PEP accessing markets • 86% PEP have access to market information • LSPs served 72% of PEPs • 98% PEP accessing targeted public services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Min. meal frequency for children doubled in a year [33% to 66%] with gender parity • LSP service coverage and customer base doubled with 60% repeat customers • Annual sales revenue from vegetables doubled over the base year • 71% received social safety net benefits

#	Indicator Description	Target FY24	Result FY24 (Weighted)	% of Target Achieved
Goal: Improved gender equitable food and nutrition security and resilience of the vulnerable people living in Char and Haor, Bangladesh by 2024				
1	RESIL-a Ability to recover from shocks and stresses index [ZOI-level]	5.5	4.96	90
Intermediate Result 1: Increased equitable access to income for both women and men, and nutritious food for men, women, boys, and girls				
2	EG.3-10,-11,-12 Yield of targeted agricultural commodities among program participants with USG assistance [IM-level]			
	Maize	8.8	8.7	99
	Chili	8.6	8.2	95
	Sweet gourd	21.1	19.9	95
	Rice	5.6	5.4	96
	Vegetables	19	17.7	93
	Goat (live)	10.1	10.6	105
	Duck	1.36	1.32	97
3	EG.3.2-26 Value of annual sales (BDT) of producers and firms receiving USG assistance [IM-level]			
	Maize	7,699,863	5,123,917	67
	Chili	1,474,206	1,518,975	103
	Sweet gourd	389,975	672,860	173
	Rice	20,893,847	27,023,762	129
	Vegetables	3,201,880	3,044,803	95
	Goat (live)	19,641,600	19,327,465	98
	Duck	980,685	865,940	88
4	EG.3.2-24: Number of individuals in the agriculture and food system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance [activity/implementing mechanism (IM) level]	133,423	138,800	104
5	EG.3.2-25 Number of hectares under improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance [IM-level]	17,688	24,636	139



#	Indicator Description	Target FY24	Result FY24 (Weighted)	% of Target Achieved
6	Custom: Mean decision-making score (Index) for women at household level	45.5	38.4	84
7	Custom: Percentage of households reported increased income	45	42	93
8	Custom: Percentage of individuals income source increased	21.5	22.2	103
9	Custom: Percentage of poor & extreme poor (PEP) households accessing markets	82	93.2	114
10	Custom: Percentage of people received service from USG supported Local Service Providers	70	71.9	103
11	Custom: Percentage of selected LSPs received service from private companies	65	87.1	134
12	Custom: Percentage of farmers who report access to market information in last 12 months	77.5	85.8	111
Intermediate Result 2: Improved and sustained nutritional status of children under five years of age, pregnant, and lactating women and adolescent girls				
13	HL.9.1-d Percent of women of reproductive age consuming a diet of minimum diversity [ZOI-level]	50	55.8	112
14	Custom: Percentage of pregnant women who received pregnancy care support (day-time rest, extra food) during pregnancy period	84.5	78.1	92
15	Custom: Percentage of participants who reported increased access to targeted public services	95	97.6	103

Intermediate Result Area (IR) 1: Increased equitable access to income for both women and men, and nutritious food for men, women, boys, and girls

The farming and livelihoods achievements for this IR are commendable with most indicators in the 90% to 110% range (see table above). Contributing factors to these high achievements are the many years of



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SHOUHARDO activities and the on-going local supportive systems such as the LSPs and the improved access to information, products and services from the public and private sectors.

While the decision-making score index for women at household level achieved 38.4, it seems a steady progress from the baseline and indicates changes likely to continue. Maize sales revenue fell significantly below target [67%] likely due to the shifting cropping pattern responding to market demand towards other crops like rice and sweet gourd, which had significant overachievement.

Intermediate Result 2: Improved and sustained nutritional status of children under five years of age, pregnant, and lactating women and adolescent girls

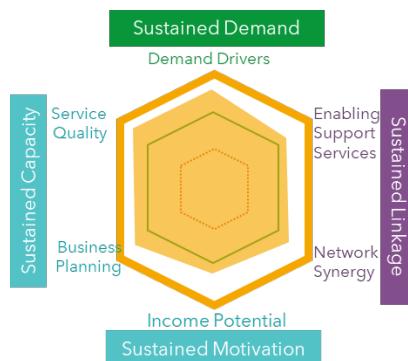
Results in this area are satisfactory with nutrition security for women increasing to 56%, supported by strong agriculture practice improvements encouraged by Agri-LSPs and the increasing importance of nutrition driven by the P-CSBAs. While pregnancy care support at 78%, is lower than for the base year (84%), it has improved over the last year and exceeded the target showing an upward trend in behavioral change. Strengthening relationship and coordinated actions with key government actor, the Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer (UH&FPO) could be a factor. Additionally, access to targeted public services is exceptional at 98% with 71% receiving some kind of direct formal support like Social Safety Net benefits from government or upazila parishad. VDC members and leaders are cited as key actors.

LSP Model Sustainability Assessment

As the final internal survey for SHOUHARDO III Plus phase, this report focused on sustainability assessment of the market-based approach using the LSP model to ensure sustained service utilization and improved behaviors for sustained impact. This phase of the project focused on 7 LSP types to build and sustain impact across three areas.

- 4 LSPs [Vaccinators, Seed Agent, Fish Fry Hawker and Collector] provide services to enable communities to adopt improved agriculture techniques, increase income and get better access to markets to drive the sustained impact on IR1.
- 2 LSPs, PCSBAs [Private Community Skilled Birth Attendants] and Blue Star Providers [BSPs] provide reproductive, maternal and child healthcare services along with nutrition for impacts on IR2.
- Lastly, Village Agents or Sanchay Sathis create savings groups and assist the members in accessing loans and investment opportunities with formal banking institutions to create financial access for the poorest in remote areas.

Considering these purposes, the LSPs were assessed on 6 sustainability characteristics, validated by community, private and public services.



Overall, the LSP model shows high relevance, efficacy and efficiency in achieving sustained impact across the 2 intermediate result areas. There is significant variance between the different LSP's sustainability which requires refinements in implementation to achieve better sustainability consistently across all LSPs.

Sustained Demand: Demand is strong in agri-inputs and market access, medium in healthcare access with scope for improvement and requires further support in financial access. Both recognized the contribution of LSP to overall change and the demand for LSP services is relatively higher in Haor than in Char as gathered from FGDs.

Sustained Capacity: 62% of the community found LSP service quality

satisfactory and 38% found it satisfactory with scope for improvement, while responsive to community needs. There was unanimous agreement on inclusivity and accessibility of LSPs. More women found LSPs service satisfactory in both Haor and Char. LSPs have demonstrated strong entrepreneurial skills in expanding their business with both coverage and customer base doubling with about 60% repeat customers which indicate appropriate selection and capacity development by the project.

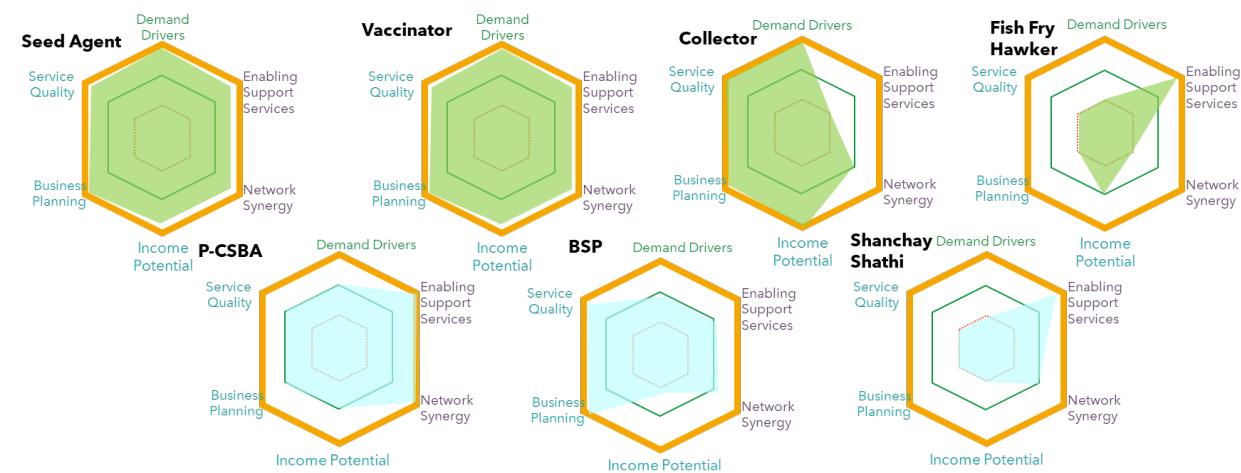


Sustained Motivation: the LSP model has strong income potential with growing demand in agriculture and suitable provider selection in healthcare. Sustained impact in fisheries and financial inclusion requires further intervention for continued motivation.

Sustained Access: Driven by SHOUHARDO's history , public sector linkages with LSP have been more successful than private sector linkage interventions. The Activity has commendable public institution selection and linkage building for sustained access post-project. Linkages lean towards inputs market and require more forward market actors for a balanced market-based approach. Financial access requires further intervention for sustainability.

LSP Network: Developed in less than a year, there was minimal time for networking collaborations to take hold. Agri-based LSPs are likely to continue, healthcare requires more proactive LSPs and for financial access, networking is not feasible without more relevant investment/loan products by SS in collaboration with other LSPs. Thus, inclusive finance requires additional intervention in networking.

LSP-wise Sustainability



Sustained Impact: IR1 - Equitable income and food and nutrition impact

The LSPs assessed were: Seed Agents, Vaccinators, Collectors and Fish Fry Hawkers. The agriculture-related LSPs are likely to attain sustained impact. Seed agents and vaccinators have demonstrated strong sustainability due to community demand, high service quality, established business acumen and significant income potential. They are actively engaged with the project and are supported by the LSP network and support services.

Collectors also have a strong business case for continuity due to significant demand, especially among women, and good income potential driven by strong business skills. Their main challenge lies in engaging public and private sector stakeholders, as they are the only LSP directly working with market access. Additionally, they require more focused engagement with the LSP network to maximize their benefits and expand their services.

Fish fry hawkers require further intervention and support such as fish selling to sustain themselves in the long run, despite good potential income and strong public sector linkages. The service appears to be in an early stage, and the providers themselves seem to be highly dependent on the LSP role as their main source of income, something the LSP model was not originally designed for.

Sustained Impact: IR2: Sustained improvement in nutrition and financial inclusion

The LSPs assessed were: P-CSBA, BSP and Sanchay Sathi. The P-CSBAs and BSP are likely to achieve sustained impact with external support from stakeholders. The P-CSBAs face a unique challenge being



highly appreciated, yet the nature of their service limits the demand, their capacities and expansion resulting in insufficient income potential. They have built linkages with public and private service providers and capitalized on the LSP network. Public service providers suggested more external interventions and additional income support for the P-CSBAs to become sustainable.

BSPs are established pharmacies in the community with established business skills, private sector network, significant expansion and trusted service providers. The LSP-specific service of Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP) is a supplemental income which contributes little and the concept of nutrition security, different from food security, is still growing within the community. Thus, the low income potential for BSPs might drive down interest to continue GMP services in the long-run without encouragement from the LSP network and public sector actors.

Sanchay Sathis are also familiar with the CARE approach and managed strong linkages. The Sanchay Sathi approach requires a long time and sustained effort compared to the return, which is likely to discourage continuation without changes to their financial skillsets and service portfolio. Overall, the financial access interventions require further intervention to become sustainable.

Program Recommendations: the LSP model in a multi-sectoral program

Overall, the Activity in this phase focused on the LSP approach to drive service utilization conducive to behavior change leading to resilience and food security. The design indicates fast adoption at community level as it capitalizes on resources and systems available within the community and selecting service providers who are familiar within the community. In addition, the selection was appropriate in matching the required local service to the core income source/business for the LSP, creating synergies. These aspects are worth replicating in future RFSA.

Considering the market-based approach (MbA), this program had a primary focus on LSPs with limited focus on forward markets. Consequently, while food prices spiked significantly in the consumer market, it did not result in an equivalent rise in farm-gate prices for the participants, as the forward market linkage was not sufficiently developed to strengthen the bargaining power of the producers. Thus, for effective outcomes from a market-based approach, a balance between supply chain, production/services and forward markets is needed. For example, in this activity, the vaccinators (supply chain service for livestock farmers) required veterinary services (production service providers) and livestock collectors/wholesalers (forward market services) to achieve higher and more sustainable outcomes and equitable access to increased income and food and nutrition security.

Secondly, the market-based approach is a tool that is intended to address specific economic inequities. It is not a universal solution to all inequities and challenges that exist across sectors. Consequently, a suggestion for a multi-sectoral program is to preempt and complement market-based interventions with social interventions in order to achieve equitable outcomes. In particular, the resilience of women is contingent upon the outcomes of their mobility, decision-making, financial, and entrepreneurial skills, which necessitate social interventions that cannot be accomplished through market incentives alone. The impacts of MbA interventions are augmented by social interventions, but the reverse is not true. For instance, a women-only approach to IGA interventions would lead to an increase in household income and equitable access to income, whereas a MbA-only approach would result in a relatively greater increase in household income but not equity, as market principles would benefit the most efficient, adaptive, and productive PEPs, who are likely to be experienced male farmers.

Also, certain impacts like equitable access to nutritious food and gender equitable healthcare access, require social interventions to first change mindsets before a MbA intervention can take hold. An example is this Activity, where prior work of SHOUHARDO in mainstreaming nutrition and connecting nutrition with women's empowerment created sufficient demand for GMP services. Similarly, P-CSBAs have delivered on their desired equitable outcomes in health and nutrition, been appreciated for it by both community and stakeholders; but have yet to find sufficient market returns to be self-sustained as a competitive service. As such, they would require additional support outside of the MbA to remain sustainable, justified by the social



welfare outcomes of their services. This could be either one-off support like medical equipment to expand their service portfolio, a bicycle to increase their mobility and thus the number of clients they can serve, etc. or it could be predicable interventions to increase health-seeking behavior for P-CSBAs services.

Lastly in development interventions, working on enabling business and linkages are often added at the end of a project or at the extension phase for sustainability, whereas in MbA, it should begin at the design stage. RFSA are interventions that lie *outside* of current market scenario, introducing technologies, services, service providers or products for the benefit of target groups. If the goal is to have the interventions be adopted within the current system so the benefits sustain beyond project; then they need to be co-designed with private and public stakeholders who are expected to continue the work post-project. Development interventions and the implementing organizations are not market actors; approaches like the LSP model should be co-designed, co-implemented and co-supervised with them such that there is a mutual exchange of learning and understanding between development approaches and market interests; with implementing partners adopting market systems thinking while market actors learning about a new customer segment they have not served previously (PEP).

Implementation Design Recommendations: the LSP model in RFSA

Bringing together the program recommendations above, below is a general guideline for integrating the LSP model in a 5 year multi-sectoral RFSA:

- Year 1: Understanding community and market actors (public and private) with social interventions for development.
- Year 2: Understanding service gaps and building demand among PEP for those services.
- Year 2.5: Mid-term review – identify successful changing behaviors, co-design LSP roles
- Year 3: Co-implement LSP identification, training and service initiation within community. Shift community-level interactions from implementing agency to LSPs
- Year 4: Co-develop LSP network and network leadership with public and private sector. Incentivize intra-LSP collaborative innovation in services by LSPs to remain market and PEP relevant
- Year 5: Shift support responsibilities of implementing agency to market actors (public, private, LSP network and community, etc.)

Sustainability recommendations: Making LSPs last in RFSAs

If the LSP model involves existing established market actors from the start of the interventions and correctly addressed the points of commonality between community needs and market actors' needs then LSPs would be sustainable on their own ideally without further interventions. However, to improve sustainability and adaptability the following would always help:

1. Joint approach with existing actors/stakeholders at every stage of intervention
2. Market re-assessments and iterative engagements in LSP role and skillset
3. Balancing social interventions with market interventions for sustained social outcomes
4. Build ownership within community from the start (no 'free' services or products)

Markets are dynamic and so are the environment and complexity of the challenges faced by PEPs. Thus, in order for the LSP model to be sustainable and remain relevant, the key skill would be adaptability and business planning, which foresees changes and takes responsive steps beforehand. The LSP model alone does not guarantee long term sustainability, requires additional factors and mechanisms like building networks, intra-LSP synergies, mixed market and social interventions, etc. to strengthen outcomes.

Community Recommendations: Sustained service Utilization

The following recommendations came across multiple FGDs conducted with PEP community on what is required for the LSPs to better serve the community and have greater sustained demand for their services. These are desired services from LSPs by the community and not analyzed for feasibility/accuracy.



General	More Female LSPs. Government certified. Market-relevant. More consistency in quality among LSPs Bicycles for LSPs so can expand their service coverage and customers' base
Seed Agent	Climate smart agri-inputs and cash crops seeds
Vaccinator	Up-to-date vaccines and animal healthcare services Trained as certified AI injectors and animal doctors [vets] Vaccine gun and cold box Systemize vaccination program every 6 months Timely free vaccine distribution and adoption with ULO. Trained on new diseases vaccination
Collector	Transportation facilities for produce [Haor] Wholesaler connection [Male] Market-responsive group crop planning Fridge/storage facilities for vegetables
Fish Fry Hawker	Sell fingerlings of high-value fish
P-CSBA	Expanded services [Adult-care (NCD), water purifying tablets, etc.] [Haor Female] with better equipment and medicine supplies as Community Clinic extension [Char Male] Certified as Govt. Health and Nutrition information volunteers for women and children and providing a wider range of healthcare Iron + Calcium tablet pre-provisioning with a card system
Sanchay Sathi	Formalized crisis loan products with group investment plans for periodic crises linked with formal banking [from Male groups in Haor] Savings and related investments [Haor] Extension agent for digital financial services including digital loan management [Private Sector]

Recommendations: Required Local Services

This section details common responses across PEP community FGDs when asked about service gaps that still exist within their communities and that LSPs could provide where people are willing to pay for services. These are a list of desired services and not assessed for feasibility/practicality.

LSPs as Government Crisis Volunteers

Training existing or new LSPs in services related to disaster response, mitigation and recovery services during floods and extended water logging afterwards

Example of services:

- Safe drinking water [low iron, pucca tubewell etc.] and sanitary latrine [pucca]
- Resistant education facilities to continue children's education
- Designated flood shelters for people and specialized flood shelters for livestock

Employment Generation and diversification:

Common response, with variations: Alternative jobs/income generation activity during flood months, linkage with industrial jobs and continuing informal education for added skills

Connectivity and transportation services adaptive to periodic natural disasters like flood and river erosion, such as boats and vans designed for carrying fragile products [e.g., vegetables, poultry, etc.]

LSPs recognized by Govt. facilities and services: Get services without political connections or bribing, Medical equipment and medicines at community clinic.



LSP model recommendations

Recommendations for the LSP model from Public Service Providers

General: Further investment in capacity building to make LSPs equivalent to government service agent counterparts [e.g. P-CSBA equivalent to Govt. HA and FWA]

Upazila -level government department involvement in participant selection and project implementation planning. Relevant government departments can provide supervision and further training. Conduct policy-level interventions as government works top-down.

IR1: LSPs with certified education and better communication skills. Combine training sessions with Govt. Counterparts, mutual information sharing platform. Joint agri-research into new varieties.

Livestock: More frequent involvement of government officers in implementation, higher honorariums. LSPs recognized as a separate position like vaccinators for children.

IR2 specific: P-CSBAs need to be certified and recognized as healthcare providers. Bringing quality diagnostics down to community level. Integration with Community Clinics. Joint coordinated funding by local NGOs to financially support P-CSBAs.

Recommendations for the LSP model from Private Service Providers

General: Reduce cost of service delivery to PEP in hard-to-reach area and private sector will increase investment and services.

LSPs are best suited to disseminate market-relevant information to change behaviors
Expertise in mobile/online-based approach is crucial to reach the more remote areas

Agri: Focus on forward market linkages. Build credibility with certification. Capitalize on increased food price inflation with increased farmgate prices – reduce intermediaries' role.

Livestock: Selective deregulations in vaccine and animal medicine market.

Health: Build credibility within community.

Linkage with doctors' network and health facilities. An inclusive and equitable paid referral service.

Develop as health insurance agents.

Linking food markets with nutrition outcomes.

Financial Access: Transform Sanchay Sathis as digital financial services extension agents.

PEP relevant group investment and savings-backed loan products.

Build on established MFIs and agent banking services in area.

Serve as financial management advisor to community.



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1. INTRODUCTION

Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO) III Plus is a two-year Activity (2022-2024) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Activity aims to improve food security, resilience, and income for 168,521 Poor and Extreme Poor (PEP) households in the remote Char and Haor regions of Bangladesh. The Activity focuses on income diversification, sustainable agriculture, market access, financial services, and nutrition. It also emphasizes gender equity, governance, disaster risk reduction, environmental considerations, and private sector engagement to maximize its impact.

This includes the continuation of engaging and linking the program-facilitated Local Service Providers (LSP) with the government and private sector, as well as promoting increased consumption of nutritious foods and micro-nutrients for children under five years of age, pregnant and lactating women, and adolescent girls. The project intervention area includes four districts (Kurigram, Gaibandha, Sirajganj and Jamalpur) in Char region and 4 districts (Netrokona, Kishoreganj, Habiganj and Sunamganj) in Haor region.

The 2024 Participant-Based Survey (PaBS) was conducted by Data Management Aid (DMA) in July 2024 and its objectives were to measure the annual monitoring indicators results through a quantitative and a qualitative survey whose objectives are:

- To generate high-quality information for measuring efficiency and effectiveness of local service providers and the service provisioning system.
- Triangulate the qualitative findings with quantitative data to better interpret the survey results.
- To evaluate LSPs performance as a model and inform on necessary adaptations to achieve program impacts, sustainability and scaling.

2. METHODOLOGY

CARE Bangladesh outsourced Data Management Aid to conduct the PaBS 2024 annual survey in May 2024. A mixed method approach using both quantitative and qualitative methods was applied and measured 15 outcome monitoring indicators against their annual targets, out of the 20 routine monitoring indicators. A total of 1,653 households were surveyed, 16 FGDs and 56 KIIs were conducted with participants, LSPs, public and private stakeholders across 16 sub-districts of 8 districts in 2 divisions.

After translating all the tools into Bengali, DMA conducted residential training for enumerators and supervisors. The analysis was done with both weighted and un-weighted data and finally, the weighted results were used while writing this report as per the Sampling Guide for Beneficiary-Based Survey. Throughout the survey process, the DMA team was fully compliant with CARE and USAID's 'do no harm' approach. The Sampling frame population for FY 2024 by indicator can be found in Annex.

2.1 Sampling Frame

SHOUHARDO III Plus does not directly implement household-level interventions but promotes service provisioning of local service providers so that households and farmers can have easy access to services and goods/products. SHOUHARDO III Plus considered SHOUHARDO III agriculture participants as a sampling frame for the PaBS. SHOUHARDO III Plus successfully engaged with a total of 164,765 PEP households through various subgroups within the Core Operational Group (COG). The COG consisted of 149,157 farmers involved in On-Farm livelihoods, 35,196 beneficiaries engaged in Off-Farm livelihoods including VSLA, and 21,197 mothers of children aged 0-59 months who benefited from the Nutrition Program. There is minimal overlap of the sampling frames. Given the relative mix of programming activities and the indicators selected to monitor program progress, four major sampling frames are sufficient to capture the information necessary to track all annual monitoring indicators.



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2.2 Sampling Method

The selection of sample cluster and survey respondents was done following instructions from the ToR based on the FANTA Sampling Guide for Beneficiary-Based Surveys. The general steps of the Sampling Units (beneficiaries) selection and data collection process are as follow:

Cluster selection: 42 clusters for COG beneficiaries, 18 clusters for Off/non-farm livelihoods beneficiaries and 15 clusters for nutrition beneficiaries (mothers with children 6-23 months) were selected using the Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) procedure.

Survey respondents selection: Survey respondents were selected using the method of Fractional Interval Systematic sampling from a comprehensive list of beneficiaries using one of two variants of an equal probability method: in each selected cluster, 15 beneficiaries were drawn randomly from the respective sampling frame.

DMA applied a participatory and consultative validation process to list the households having children 6-59 months in the Nutrition sampled villages. In the sample villages, DMA staff conducted a large group discussion with members of the Village Development Committees (VDCs). DMA staff preliminarily identified households with children under five (5-59 months) in those settings. Then, staff visited every listed household to confirm the eligibility criteria. Tablets were used for household listing. Programming the survey allowed DMA to program all the skip patterns and automate the differences between two sources of information. DMA teams then constructed the sampling frame and selected sample as per eligibility criteria to interview for the MCHN survey.

The FY24 PaBS sampling frame has been constructed from the Program MIS database system. The MIS database has been designed to identify households by beneficiary types with unique identifiers both for households and individuals in those households. Data analysis was conducted by statisticians with prior experience working on USAID project surveys and studies. The DMA Data Analyst prepared the sampling plan and sampling frame.

Sampling weights and treatment of non-response: during analysis, sampling weights have been included in the data file. The formulae used to calculate the sampling weights have been included as part of the data dictionary document. DMA made sure that standard procedures in developing sampling weights were followed according to the FANTA guideline. Households' non-response adjustment was also made to the sampling weights as part of the final weighting system and described how the outliers have been addressed.

Table: Sample Sizes for the PaBS 2024

Sampling Frame Population	Sample	Sampling Frame Population	Sample
Frame 1: On-farm livelihoods	630	Frame 2: Off/non-farm livelihoods	360
Maize	105	Frame 3: Nutrition Interventions for mothers of children aged 0-59 Months	360
Chili	105	Frame 4: Local Service Providers (LSPs)	303
Sweet Gourd	105		Total 1,653
Poultry Duck	105	Qualitative	
Goats	105	FGD [PEP]	16
Agri others (rice & vegetables)	105	LSP KII	28
		Public Service Provider	8
		Private Sector	2
		VDC member	2

Development of the PaBS Instruments: All the tools (quantitative and qualitative) were developed by DMA following the Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS). The tools were shared with SHOUHARDO



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III Plus core team members and revised as per their feedback. The final tools were translated into Bangla and approved by SHOUHARDO III Plus Team.

Selection and Training of Enumerators: 20 enumerators and 4 supervisors were employed for data collection and received a 5-day training in Rangpur that included classroom sessions, classroom practice of data collection using electronic devices, one day field practice, debriefing session, finalization of the tablet questionnaire and team formation.

2.3 Qualitative Study

For qualitative study, a total of 16 FGDs and 56 KIIs were conducted with the following target groups covering all the 8 intervention districts, i.e., 4 districts in the Char region and 4 districts in the Haor region. The samples were selected purposively to get a better insight with more contextual variability.

Qualitative Methods

Focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted to understand the in-depth perspective of diverse groups about the access to local services, service quality, the effectiveness of service system, the challenges and the lessons learned. FGDs were organized with 8-10 homogenous sample. All the FGD participants had a common feature and FGD facilitators ensured that participants met the desired common criterion, i.e., poor and extreme poor (PEP) participants. The responses were categorized using framework analysis, common responses overall and clustered by gender and region were analyzed.

Key Informant Interviews (KII) were administered with the Local Service Providers (LSPs), public service providers, representatives of the private sector and members of Village Development Committees (VDC).

- LSPs: seven categories of LSPs: i) Vaccinators; ii) Seed Agents; iii) Collectors; iv) Fish Fry Hawkers; v) Sanchay Sathi vi) Private Community Skilled Birth Attendants (PCSBAs) and vii) Blue Star Providers (BSPs)
- Public Service Providers: Included Departments/Extension Services in agriculture, livestock, fisheries and health and family planning. The Key Informants were Upazila level officers and community level service providers.
- Private Sector: Included animal health, seed companies' representatives and local banking representatives.

Sustainability Focus Qualitative Study: The KIIs focused on assessing the LSPs performance across several factors to judge the likelihood for sustainability: resources, capacity (skills and training to provide services), linkages (relationship with public and private sector), motivation. LSPs continued service delivery (demand and monthly income), gender inclusion, challenges and support and linking to private sectors.

Expectations and Recommendations for Future Improvements and Plans: The FGDs focused on peoples' sustained access to LSPs and public service providers and the challenges they faced. The consultation meetings emphasized the partners' views on LSPs' work and sustainability, community demand for services and access, and challenges faced by partners during implementation of project activities,



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3. SUMMARY TABLE OF ITT RESULTS

Ind. #	Indicator Description	Base Value	Target FY23	Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of FY24 Target Achieved
1	RESIL-a Ability to recover from shocks and stresses index [ZOI-level]	0	5	4.9	5.5	4.96	90%
	Gendered Household Type:						
	Male and Female Adults (M&F)		5.5	5.1	5.25	4.96	
	Adult Female No Adult Male (FNM)		5.0	3.9	4.5	5.00	
	Adult Male No Adult Female (MNF)		4.5	4.1	5	4.85	
	Child No Adults (CNA)						
Intermediate Result 1: Increased equitable access to income for both women and men, and nutritious food for men, women, boys, and girls							
4	EG.3.2-26 Value of annual sales (BDT) of producers and firms receiving USG assistance [IM-level]						
	Maize	7,111,673	7,324,025	7,520,656	7,699,863	5,123,917	67%
	Chili	1,337,414	1,368,670	1,472,930	1,474,206	1,518,975	103%
	Sweet gourd	404,827	413,066	373,030	389,975	672,860	173%
	Rice	17,031,700	17,194,306	20,885,747	20,893,847	27,023,762	129%
	Vegetables	1,565,639	1,600,940	3,190,294	3,201,880	3,044,803	95%
	Goat (live)	14,665,335	14,999,040	17,556,591	19,641,600	19,327,465	98%
	Duck	680,610	709,009	922,895	980,685	865,940	88%
6	EG.3.2-24: Number of individuals in the agriculture and food system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance [activity/implementing mechanism (IM) level]						
		139028	139879	133282.0	133423	138080.00	103%
	Apply At least 3 technologies	97.5	100	99.8		98.75	
7	EG.3.2-25 Number of hectares under improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance [IM-level]	15,029	15,583	17621.9	17,688	24,636	139%
9	EG.3.10,-11,-12 Yield of targeted agricultural commodities among program participants with USG assistance [IM-level]						
A	Maize yields	7.94	8.04	8.8	8.84	8.74	99%
	TP (MT)	20,411	20,815	28,043	28,139	16,310	58%
	PA (Ha)	2,572	2,589	3,178	3,182	1,867	59%
B	Chili yields	8.14	8.17	8.6	8.6	8.18	95%
	TP (MT)	2,990	3,007	2,991	3,100	2,346	76%
	PA (Ha)	367	367	348	360	286	80%
C	Sweet gourd yields	17.56	17.66	21.0	21.05	19.92	95%
	TP (MT)	1,778	1,847	1,847	1,888	2,818	149%
	PA (Ha)	101	104	88	89	141	158%



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Ind. #	Indicator Description	Base Value	Target FY23	Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of FY24 Target Achieved
D	Rice yields	5.59	5.65	5.1	5.6	5.35	96%
	TP (MT)	63,749	67,408	68,389	74,991	115,535	154%
	PA (Ha)	11,400	11,932	13,334	13,380	21,595	161%
E	Vegetables yields	15.84	16.08	18.9	18.97	17.72	93%
	TP (MT)	9,310	9,470	12,678	12,807	13,216	103%
	PA (Ha)	587	589	672	675	745	110%
F	Goat (live) yields	9.01	9.26	10.1	10.09	10.63	105%
	TP (MT)	2,874	3,000	3,176	3,190	2,975	93%
	PA (number)	319,027	323,788	315,217	316,170	279,982	89%
G	Duck yields	1.27	1.29	1.3	1.36	1.32	97%
	TP (Kg)	413,902	424,080	304,270	318,060	362,588	114%
	PA (number)	326,542	328,662	227,412	233,244	275,227	118%
5	Custom : Mean decision making score (Index) for women at household level	37.6	38.5	45.5	45.5	38.4	84%
8	Custom: Percentage of households reported increased income	0	40.0	42.7	45.0	42	93%
10	Custom : Percentage of individuals with increased income sources	0	25	21.0	21.5	22.2	103%
11	Custom: Percentage of poor & extreme poor (PEP) households accessing markets	81	85	81	82	93	114%
12	Custom : Percentage of people received service from USG supported Local Service Providers	97	98	69	70	72	103%
13	Custom : Percentage of selected LSPs received services from private companies		75	55	65	87	134%
15	Custom: Percentage of farmers who report accessing market information in last 12 months	74	77	76	78	86	111%
Intermediate Result 2: Improved and sustained nutritional status of children under five, pregnant, and lactating women and adolescent girls							
18	HL.9.1-d Percent of women of reproductive age consuming a diet of minimum diversity [ZOI-level]		55	50	50	56	112%
	< 19 years		55	50	50	50	100%
	19+ years		65	450	50	56	112%
19	Custom : Percentage of pregnant women who received pregnancy care support (day-time rest, extra food) during pregnancy period	84	85	77	85	78	92%
20	Custom : Percentage of participants who reported increased access to targeted public services	95	95	90	95	98	103%

Table 1: Summary of ITT results



4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

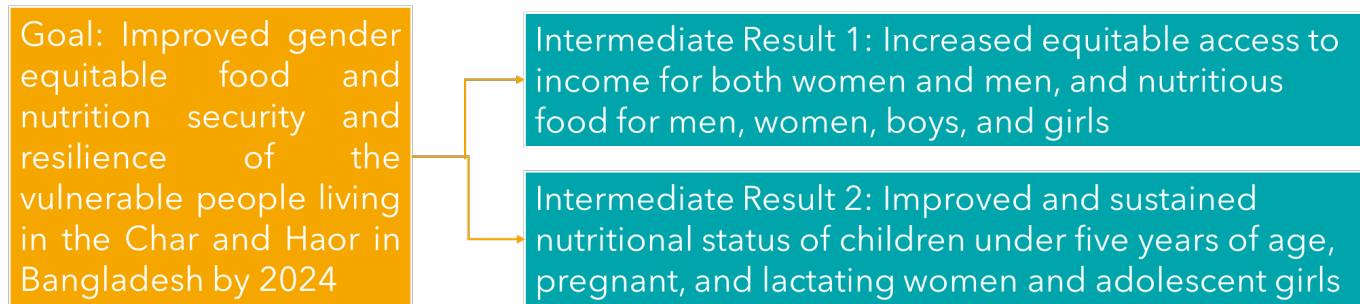


Figure 1: Activity Goal and Intermediate Results

Goal: Improved gender equitable food and nutrition security and resilience of the vulnerable people living in the Char and Haor regions of Bangladesh by 2024

RESIL-a Ability to recover from shocks and stresses index [ZOI-level]



Figure 2: Resilience score
[disaggregated]

The Ability to Recover from Shocks and Stresses Index, as elaborated in the Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) document, is a tool used to gauge how well households can recover from common challenges like the loss of a family member, income reduction, hunger, drought, floods, conflict and other similar difficulties. This index is built on data related to how households coped with 16 types of shocks and stressors in the year before a survey and their outlook on being able to meet their food needs in the upcoming season.

In PaBS FY24, the calculation of the resilience capacity of the participating households of SHOUHARDO III Plus in the Char and Haor regions indicated an index of 4.96, a 90% achievement of the 5.5 target and with an index maximum of 6, indicating that the respondents feel more resilient than last year, but not as much as the project aimed. This agrees with the qualitative findings that all the PEP respondents indicated to have a better quality of life now (resilience, economic and social).

Index of social capital at household level

This indicator is composed of two indices to measure the ability of participant households in the target area to draw on social networks to get support to mitigate the impact of shocks and stressors on their households. It also offers valuable insights into the dynamics of social capital and support networks within and beyond the community. In PaBS FY24, the achievement for social capital index was found to be 72%. The bonding sub-index at household level was 77% while the bridging sub-index was 67%.

Despite the challenges, the overall improvement in resilience was driven by women, whose score rose from 3.9 to 5, the men's rose from 4.1 to 4.85. This is with the backdrop of consistent inflation for the last two years, with national food price inflation reaching 14% in July 2024ⁱ with an upward trend. This is reflected at participant level as their household monthly food expenses rose by 52% [1.5 times] in 18 months, driven up by price of imported essentials like oil and onion, staples like rice and potato and protein source [meat]. This increase in general prices has resulted in decreasing income in households despite increasing annual sales. Even in these difficult times, lasting years, participants demonstrated adopting modern agriculture techniques and improved health practices, particularly maternal and childcare which is reflected in higher resilience score increase among women. This may also reflect a LSP contribution and a strong legacy of the sustained impact of SHOUHARDO who have been working in these areas for close to 20 years.



4.1 Intermediate Result Area 1: Increased equitable access to income for both women and men, and nutritious food for men, women, boys, and girls

The analysis looked for quantitative changes to agriculture practices and outputs for participant households and combined with qualitative responses from participants, government and private sector actors to validate the changes and the likely role played by 4 LSPs [vaccinators, seed agents, collectors and fish fry hawkers].

4.1.1 EG.3.2-24: Number of individuals in the agriculture and food system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance

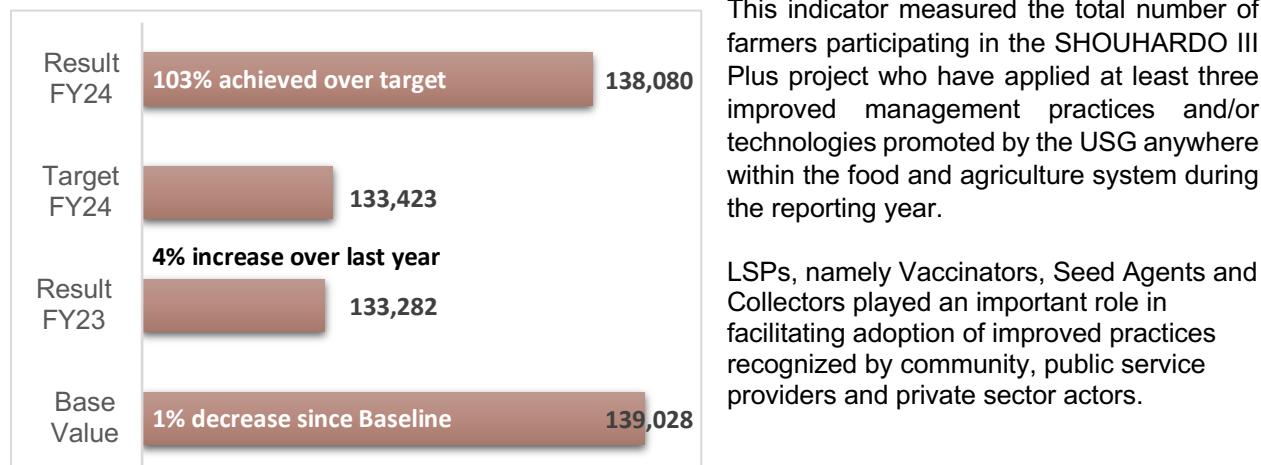


Figure 3: Number of individuals in the agriculture and food system who have applied improved management practices or technologies

From the FGDs ,the following were mentioned most as high adoption:

1. Quality seeds and fertilizers
2. Poultry and goat vaccination
3. Homestead gardening techniques
4. Safe pesticide use [95% using masks, 63% spraying per wind direction]

99%

apply at least 3 improved practices or technologies

The following changes requires more support in continued adoption:

1. Climate adaptive agriculture practices [6.4%] [Availability of climate resilient seed varieties]
2. Poultry and livestock medication and improved feed [Highly regulated, government-controlled]
3. Improved breed of poultry and livestock [lacking familiarity, availability and affordability]

Vegetable, poultry and livestock – relevant to women, have more positive change than maize and rice, where relatively more men are involved, reinforcing the likely LSP contribution.

4.1.2 EG.3.2-25: Number of hectares under improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance [IM-level]

Table 2: Hectares under improved management practices or technologies

Base Value	Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of Target Achieved (%)
15,029	17,622	17,688	24,636	139

Among the most significant project achievements, the results for 2024 were 28% higher than last year and 40% higher than the base line. This rapid growth in farming acreage, despite the increasing cost of farming, implies that the participants are willing to take greater risks and have an increased ability to invest.



4.1.3 EG.3-10-11-12: Yield of targeted agricultural commodities among program participants with USG assistance

Table 3: Yield of targeted agricultural commodities among program participants [MT/Ha for crop and kg/animal for livestock]

Crop yields	Base Value	Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of Target Achieved
Maize	7.9	8.8	8.8	8.7	99
Chili	8.1	8.6	8.6	8.2	95
Sweet gourd	17.6	21.0	21.0	19.9	95
Rice	5.6	5.1	5.6	5.4	96
Vegetables	15.8	18.9	19	17.7	93
Goat (live)	9	10.1	10.1	10.6	105
Duck	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.3	97

All crops and livestock reached their targeted yield [+/- 5%] with goats over performing. Looking at the detailed table, compared to FY23, maize production and acreage have dropped by over 70% while rice has increased by 40% along with a 38% increase in sweet gourd production and 10% in vegetables in FY24. This indicates a shifting cropping pattern likely led by shifting market dynamics. Following the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022, the price of fertilizer increased sharply due to rising cost of imports. This may have led to farmers shifting away from maize, which is resource intensive, requiring more fertilizer per acre – towards the other crops. Also, consistent food price inflation results in markets trending towards basic food items, creating demand pressure on rice and vegetables while imports becoming more expensive may have led to local protein sources like duck, goat and poultry becoming more competitive.

The marked increase in yield, production and acreage/unit in sweet gourd, vegetables, ducks and goats are all women-led agricultural production and where the LSPs have focused. This is likely indicating agri-practices and crop-planning diversifying to expand from homestead towards commercial production – a strong indication of LSP contributions and sustained changes.

4.1.4 EG.3.2-26 Value of annual sales of producers and firms receiving USG assistance [IM-level]

Table 4: Value of annual sales of producers and farms (BDT)

Indicator Description	Base Value	Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of Target Achieved (%)
Sweet gourd	404,827	373,030	389,975	672,860	173
Rice	17,031,700	20,885,747	20,893,847	27,023,762	129
Chili	1,337,414	1,472,930	1,474,206	1,518,975	103
Goat (live)	14,665,335	17,556,591	19,641,600	19,327,465	98
Vegetables	1,565,639	3,190,294	3,201,880	3,044,803	95
Duck	680,610	922,895	980,685	865,940	88
Maize	7,111,673	7,520,656	7,699,863	5,123,917	67

This indicator is strongly linked with IR1 as it defines the sales from which income is generated. As illustrated above as compared to target, the crops that best performed were sweet gourd and rice, followed by matching targets in chili, goat and vegetables and lastly duck and maize not reaching the expected targets. The agri-produce market is volatile by nature as crops are seasonal and thus supply will vary greatly. Thus, a look at annual sales in comparison to the baseline will provide a longer view on each crop's market changes. In comparison to the baseline, annual sales from vegetables have doubled and sweet gourd with 80% increase while rice has had a most positive cumulative impact with a 30% increase. On the other hand, a 32% drop in annual sales of maize negatively impacted the overall performance in this indicator. The drop in production and acreage in maize explored in yield indicators (EG.3-10-11-12) is the



reason behind this drop. The success of sweet gourd, rice, vegetables and goat is a likely indication of LSPs contribution to changes, particularly the role of collectors who increased market access for women.

4.1.5 Custom: Percentage of households reporting increased income

Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of Target Achieved
43	45	42	93

Table 5: Percentage of households reported increased income

Despite increases in yield, total production and significant increase in annual sales, only 42% of participants reported their HH income increasing in the 2024 PaBS. Inflation pressures drove up prices of inputs and household expenditure. This has led to 85% HH reporting expenditures increase. The impacts of price hike are explained in the resilience section. The other challenge from inflation was that scaling agricultural production was stymied by the sharp rise in price of fertilizers in 2023ⁱ. Thus, only 54% of respondents reported their production increasing over the last year, 26% reported a decrease and 20% remained unchanged.

What is unfortunate is that the high prices of food did *not* reflect a proportionate increase in the price of produce. Consequently, the PEP, most of whom are involved with agriculture as their main income source, were squeezed on both ends with stagnant produce prices and rising food prices. It is likely that the market intermediaries/middlemen have a strong hold on the food distribution market which the PEP have little bargaining power to address. The project focused on the supply chain/input side of the agri-market and had only the collectors as forward market actors. A consummate market-based approach would require equal focus on backward and forward market linkages.

4.1.6 Custom 9: Percentage of individuals with increased income sources

Table 6: Percentage of individuals with increased income sources

Target FY23	Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of Target Achieved
25	21	21.5	22.2	103

New income sources remained stagnant for about 20% of respondents. This was validated in FGDs with participants where "income diversification and new employment opportunities" being the top response to the query on unmet community needs. Agriculture remains the main source of livelihood for PEP; not out of choice but from lack of it. Compared to Haor, Char is relatively better connected to main economic hubs and is more resilient. Consequently, they expressed interest in pursuing livelihoods in industrial work [garment factories] in the service sector like retailing or as local transport operators [boat, electric vans, scooter, etc.] – these livelihoods being less affected or unaffected by climactic impacts. Since the LSP model approach is built for creating opportunities in the existing market systems, it is not suited for driving economic diversity and dynamism. Thus, this 22.2% achievement is acceptable for the project.

4.1.7 Custom 10: Percentage of poor & extreme poor (PEP) households accessing markets

Base Value	Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of Target Achieved
81	81	82	93	114

Table 7: Percentage of poor & extreme poor (PEP) households accessing markets

93% of households accessing markets is one of the highlight achievements of SHOUHARDO III Plus and the LSP model. The last 15% of any market are the hardest to reach, the last-mile delivery challenges are compounded by the geographical challenges and road connectivity problems of the Char and Haor areas. Thus, the 90%+ access is exceptional and has strong attribution to the LSPs: Seed agent, vaccinators, Collectors in agri-services, P-CSBA for healthcare and Sanchay Sathi for financial access are particularly mentioned, especially by women.

Overall, road connectivity to economic hubs is a key factor in market accessibility for these areas, thus the impact of LSP was stronger in Haor than in Char areas. The roles of LSPs were not only appreciated by



the community, but also by private sector actors. Both private sector seed company and bank representatives stated that the hard-to-reach areas in Char and Haor are too costly to deliver to and promote their products/services . Using the LSPs as their representative reduces the cost of customer acquisition and delivery costs; thus, making this market viable , especially women.

4.1.8 Custom 14: Percentage of farmers who reported to get market information in last 12 months

Base Value	Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of Target Achieved
73.5	75.5	77.5	85.8	111

Table 8: Percentage of farmers who reported to get market information in last 12 months

The ability of LSPs to bridge gaps in market information has exceeded expectations. Collectors were most impactful in sharing market information. While 50% of participants still sell to neighbors directly or through the local market; 38% now sell to a trader who purchases from households (Collector) and 1% sell at collection points. Collectors achieving 40% adoption in two years is a high adoption rate for a market-based intervention. Similarly, 13.3% of participants now buy inputs (seeds, fertilizers, etc.) from seed agents who come to their homestead. Vaccinators and seed agents shared information on good seeds for the upcoming season and new diseases to watch out for respectively. P-CSBAs share information on nearest hospitals for advanced care in case of emergencies for pregnant women.

4.1.9 Custom 11: Percentage of people received service from USG supported Local Service Providers

Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of Target Achieved
69	70	72	103

Table 9:Percentage of people received service from USG supported Local Service Providers

72% target market reach in 2 years is commendable, considering the service adoption was natural and not incentivized by interventions [e.g., providing services for free/subsidized rate]. The key to this success was SHOUHARDO's selection and capacity building of the right actors as LSPs. In most cases, the LSPs were already established service providers in the community, involved in services connected to their designated LSP role. For example, vaccinators were already working in the community as animal healthcare providers like AI injectors, animal medicine and supplement sellers, many seed agents have an established agri-input shop in the community, P-CSBAs and Sanchay Sathi were carried over from prior CARE projects so they are known and have expertise in their roles from the start. Consequently, acceptance and credibility within the community was strong from the start. However, not all LSPs have been equally pervasive within the community.

Vaccinator	%	Blue Star Provider	%
Vaccinated livestock & poultry	75	Growth Monitoring	18
Seed Agent	%	P-CSBA	%
Purchased Seed	67	Received ANC/PNC service	16
Collector	%	Fish Fry Hawker	%
Sell Ag-product to collectors	54	Purchase Fingerling	7
Sanchay Sathi	%	WASH	%
Collect savings	47	TW maintenance /repair works	34

Table 10: By-LSP service uptake with most popular service

As seen in table 10, Agri-based LSPs were most favored, followed by Sanchay Sathi. As these LSPs have direct connection to program outcomes in equitable income and nutrition security; their high adoption rate and skilled services were essential to sustainable behavior change and service utilization for sustainable project impact.

Health-based LSPs, BSP and P-CSBA had low adoption, especially considering both have been operating in their roles for years prior to the project. From qualitative interactions with community, public and private service providers the reasons were surmised as such: P-CSBAs

are recognized and valued for their services; but the nature of the service limits scaling up to reach many more customers and the demand is sporadic. BSPs are already established pharmacies in the community and the GMP service they provide is at their pharmacy which limits scaling up as mothers must travel to their location to receive it. Fish Fry hawker is not being adopted widely and likely to discontinue without



further intervention support. Interestingly, WASH service providers, particularly sanitation and TW repairs are considered an LSP intervention by participants although it is not part of SHOUHARDO III Plus. Further details on specific service adoption can be found in Annex.

4.1.10 Custom 12: Percentage of selected LSPs receiving services from private companies

Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of Target Achieved
55.0	65	87.1	134

Table 11: Percentage of selected LSPs receiving services from private companies

Received services from private company or local dealer in the past 12 months (%)
Seed Agent 95
Vaccinator 78

Table 12: Received services from private company or local dealer in the past 12 months (%)

Private sector support linkage for LSPs has been strong with some scope for improvement. Focusing on Seed Agents and Vaccinators, there has been strong pre-existing relationships leveraged to enhance LSPs' sustainability and business strength.

Both seed agents and vaccinators have strong linkages.

The relevant companies had representatives down to the union level who have an organizational directive to reach PEP communities. Seed and agri-markets in general are highly competitive which makes the private companies proactive in working with LSPs.

Overall, just like the LSPs, the market linkages are also supply-chain/input-heavy with only one forward market company – Bengal Meat for vaccinators. An effective market-based approach has a balance of both to take advantage of increased productivity with better market access and competitive prices for increased equitable income. It is also noted that in all the private company linkages, no online commerce companies were found.

4.2 Intermediate Result 2: Improved and sustained nutritional status of children under five years of age, pregnant, and lactating women and adolescent girls

4.2.1 Percentage of pregnant women who received pregnancy care support (day-time rest, extra food) during pregnancy period

Base Value	Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of Target Achieved
84.1	76.9	84.5	78.1	92

Table 13: pregnant women who received pregnancy care support (day-time rest, extra food) during pregnancy period

P-CSBAs' contribution to improving MCHN and raising awareness on the importance of nutrition has been acknowledged by communities and public service and private sector actors. Change in ANC uptake has been minimal considering the established role of P-CSBAs in the communities. Considering that 93% of women have received an ANC nationally [BDHS 2022], the 51% uptake by SHOUHARDO participants has scope for improvement. In general, health-seeking behavior is impacted by road connectivity, thus in more established Char, it has made accessing pregnancy-related healthcare more feasible, while the role of P-CSBAs have been more appreciated in Haor.

The greater engagement of men in sharing household tasks with women has been another positive change. 86.4% of men reported sharing tasks with women, with 54% looking after elderly, pregnant HH member, and sharing other traditionally female gendered roles like childcare (68%), housecleaning (64%), gathering water/firewood (62%) and cooking (47%).

4.2.2 HL.9.1-d: Percentage of women of reproductive age consuming a diet of minimum diversity [ZOI-level]

Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of Target Achieved
49.8	50	55.8	112

Table 14: Percentage of women of reproductive age consuming a diet of minimum diversity [ZOI-level]

A crucial indicator that directly contributes to the nutrition security goal and an improved nutrition status, progress on this indicator has exceeded the target. The impact of this indicator, while driven by P-CSBA



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was assisted by other LSPs like seed agents and collectors – who have driven the increased vegetable production including cash vegetable crops like sweet gourd.

P-CSBAs have been recognized by the community in raising awareness on the importance of nutrition. Thus, despite the rapid price hike over 2 years, project participants have been able to maintain their minimum dietary diversity. An early sign of sustained impact is that among the SHOUHARDO participants, equitable distribution of food and nutrition security is being achieved.

For children [6-23 months], 55% are receiving the minimum dietary diversity and 66% are receiving the minimum meal frequency, with equitable distribution (Girls: 67%, Boys: 64%). This indicates a cultural shift within households on equally investing in children regardless of gender and it should have a long-term impact on SHOUHARDO's goal.

4.2.3 Custom 5: Mean decision-making score (Index) for women at household level

Base Value	Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of Target Achieved
37.6	45.5	45.5	38.4	84

Table 15: Mean decision-making score (Index) for women at household level

The decision-making score for women at household level has remained around the base value. While participants are aware of the cost and consequences of GBV (99%) and more men are sharing household tasks (86%), women's mobility, measured as ability to visit certain locations without permission/just inform has fallen from 71% in the 2023 PaBS to 57%. Looking at the implementation strategy of SHOUHARDO III Plus, it focused on the LSP approach to engage communities. This means that since 2020, the project has not directly worked with the communities and since 2022 it has not worked with social and behavioral aspects at all. The LSP model is built on a market-based approach, designed for addressing market challenges with economic incentives. Thus, the service providers, although trained in engaging in social aspects like empowerment, they are not incentivized or focused on it. In such a scenario, some slowing down in behavior change is expected. What is encouraging is that despite the lack of direct intervention addressing this change, the index score has remained stable with an upward changing trend, indicating sustainability of changes and sustained impact.

4.2.4 Custom 19: Percentage of participants who reported increased access to targeted public services

Base Value	Result FY23	Target FY24	Result FY24	% of Target Achieved
95	90	95	98	103

Table 16: Percentage of participants who reported increased access to targeted public services

Access to public services has been among the highlight achievements of SHOUHARDO III Plus and the SHOUHARDO project in its entirety. The project integrated public services in every stage of its implementation, linking LSPs with them as well as working with them directly to build the capacity of LSPs.

71% received some kind of formal support from government or UP in last 12 months. Most common were social safety net (SSN) benefits (71%), nationality/character certificate (24%), birth/death certificate (31%), emergency food assistance (21%). Seed agents, vaccinators, P-CSBAs are among the key LSPs cited for better linkage with public service actors. VDC members or leaders have also been cited as key actors for support in accessing UP services (49%) and NBD services (34.4%).

Similarly, 14% received support from NGOs in the last 12 months, namely in cash assistance (53%), agriculture inputs (28%), livestock inputs (32%) and nutrition/supplemental feeding (28%).



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Table 17: Actors providing agriculture service to PEP

Did household receive agricultural services in the past 12 months (%)?	55
<i>Government</i>	39
<i>NGO</i>	4.5
<i>LSP</i>	64
<i>Private sector</i>	34

From the table we can see the relative impact of LSPs compared to other stakeholders in providing agriculture services. Half the participants received some kind of service with LSPs as the leading service provider, followed by government and the private sector.

5. LSP Performance and sustainability

The SHOUHARDO III Plus initiative prioritizes diverse income avenues, champions sustainable agriculture-led growth, expands market accessibility, particularly for women and girls, and strengthens financial service access for PEP participants. A foundational aspect of the activity is the improvement of nutritional health for children under five, pregnant and lactating women, and adolescent girls. This goal is actualized through leveraging services from both government and the private sector, including through the program-facilitated Local Service Providers (LSPs) in underserved areas.

In line with its service provision strategy, SHOUHARDO III Plus has established seven LSP categories in isolated areas, catering to a wide range of community needs for both PEP and Non-PEP demographics. These LSPs are deeply committed to their communities, frequently offering goods and services at minimal costs to aid the extremely underprivileged.

Through linkage meetings and other initiatives, SHOUHARDO III Plus cultivates partnerships between LSPs, the government, and private enterprises. This collaboration encompasses key governmental sectors including agriculture, livestock, fisheries, health, family planning, and women's and children's affairs. By aligning LSPs with these departments, the Activity aims to guarantee a consistent provision of essential services. An illustration of this is how vaccinators leverage vaccines sourced from the livestock department to augment and advocate for vaccination services at the grassroots level. Concurrently, with the support of SHOUHARDO III Plus, community representatives, particularly the VDCs, actively engage with both local and national government institutions, to assist with timely and expected service delivery from both the public sector and LSPs.

Under the program's design, seven distinct types of LSPs operate in regions where there is a marked absence of public services such as PCSBAs services. Although the qualitative survey emphasizes WASH LSPs, the current iteration of SHOUHARDO III Plus does not cover this sector. Funding limitations prevented its integration post-SHOUHARDO III. However, insights from the qualitative survey underscore the significance and sustained service delivery by these LSPs, affirming the sustainability of their service.

To elevate service standards and expand the reach across both public and private sectors, SHOUHARDO III Plus unceasingly endorses skill enhancement and program synergies. It is imperative to recognize that LSPs' service scope is not restricted to a singular domain. They frequently span multiple sectors, and as the survey reveals, sometimes venture beyond established parameters, providing an extensive range of services and products.

The PaBS 2024 assessment looked at LSP's performance through surveying LSPs and then validating the findings with qualitative findings from community, public service providers and private sector actors. The assessment was based on LSP sustainability framework looking at sustained motivation, capacity, linkage and resource leading to sustained service delivery, access and demand.

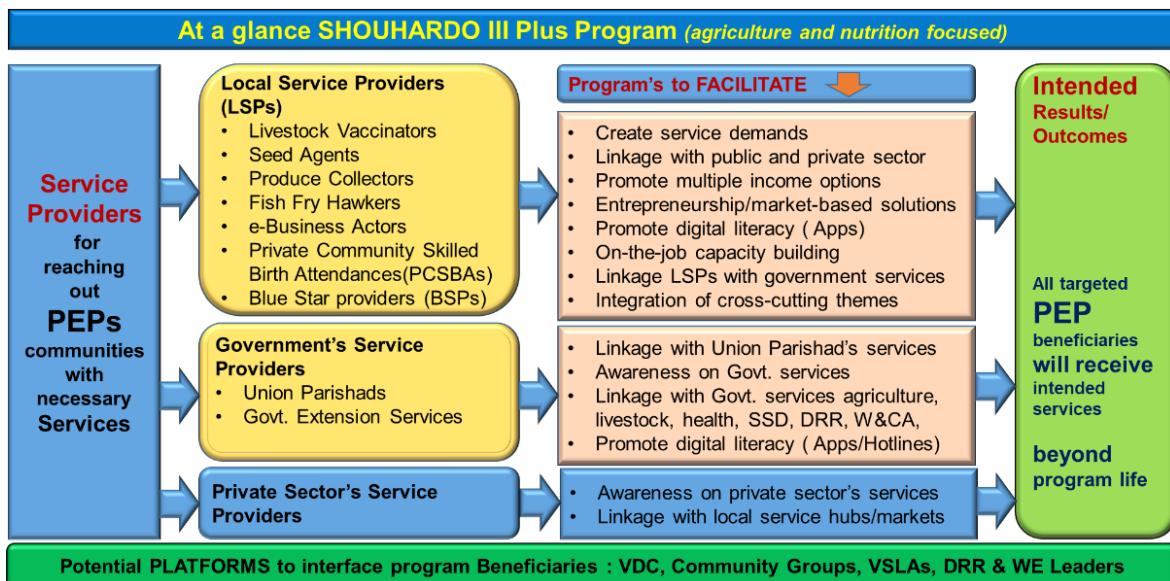


Figure 4: SHOUHARDO III Plus Program

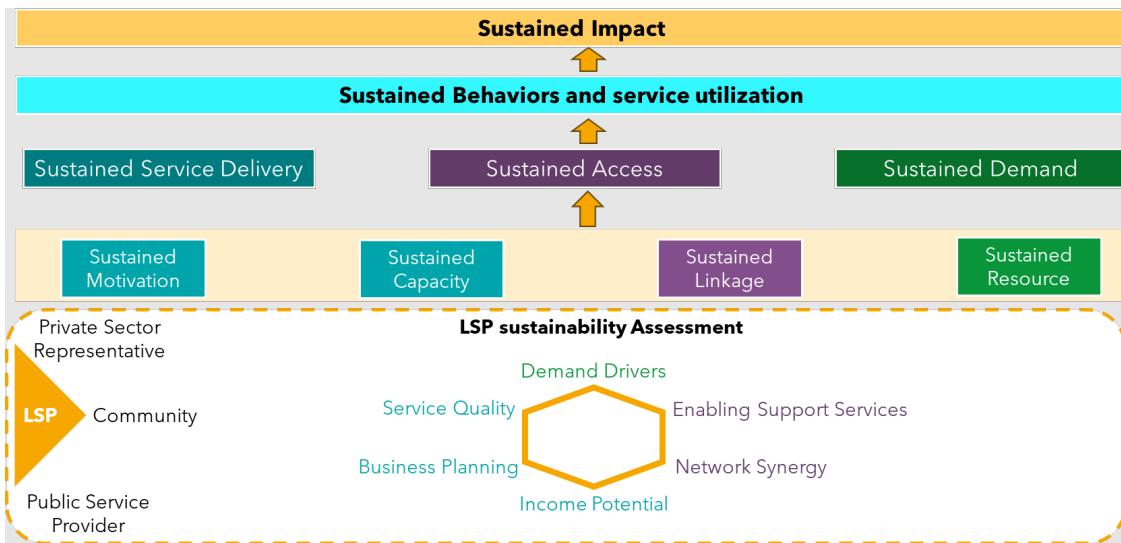


Figure 5: LSP sustainability framework and assessment

As illustrated above, each LSP was assessed on 6 factors split thus:

- Sustained Demand
 - Sustained Resource: (1) Demand drivers
- Sustained Service Delivery
 - Sustained Capacity: (2) Service quality and (3) Business planning
 - Sustained Motivation: (4) Income Potential
- Sustained Access:
 - Sustained Linkage: (5) Enabling support services and (6) Network Synergies

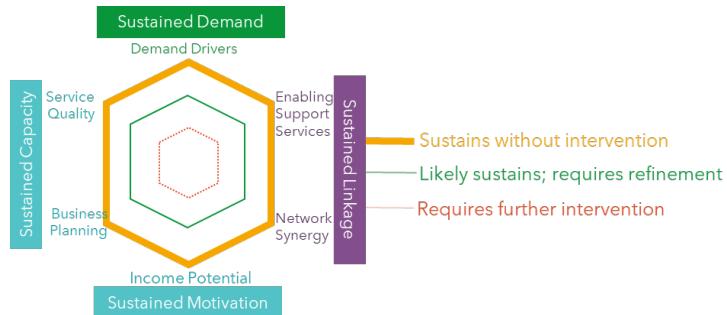
The cumulative assessment of these 7 types of LSPs gave an overview of the LSP model's overall sustainability in its ability to deliver sustained impact across (1) Sustained income growth and food and nutrition security (2) sustained health outcomes in nutrition (3) sustained access to finances



The measure of sustainability across the 6 factors was divided into 3 levels of decreasing sustainability:

1. Continues without intervention
2. Likely continues and can increase with refinements in implementation
3. Requires further intervention

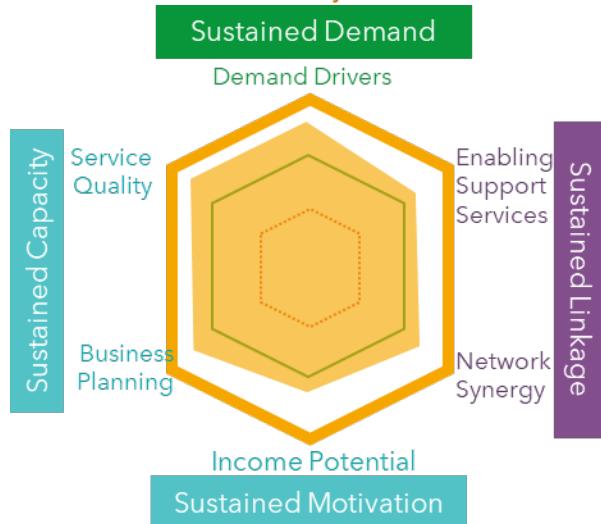
The assessment culminates in mapping the sustainability across a web matrix as shown below:



This mapping is done for each LSP type individually and cumulatively for the LSP model.

Figure 6: LSP Model Sustainability mapping

5.1 LSP model sustainability



Overall, the LSP model shows high relevance, efficacy and efficiency in achieving sustained impact across the 2 intermediate result areas. There is significant variance between the LSP's sustainability which requires refinements in implementation to achieve better sustainability in business performance factors. The following section will explore each business performance factor across LSPs to provide a model overview.

5.1.1 Demand Drivers

Overall, demand is strong in agri-inputs and market access, medium in healthcare access with scope for improvement and requires further support in financial access.

In the LSP survey, all LSPs except Fish Fry Hawkers perceive high demand for their services. This was validated by community response who had unanimous agreement on continuing LSP services and a willingness to pay with service costs found to be reasonable. This was also confirmed by public and private sector service providers.

LSP-wise variations: Vaccinators and seed agents had high demand and acknowledgement across gender and region. Sanchay Sathi, P-CSBA and collectors had female-leaning demand while both Fish Fry Hawker (FFH) and BSPs had low awareness and demand for their services.

Regional variations: Regional variations were found in qualitative study. Demand for LSPs is influenced by road connectivity to main economic hubs. Thus, both perceived contribution of LSP to overall change and demand for LSP is relatively higher in Haor than in Char where settled Char have relatively better road connectivity and higher economic vibrancy. This results in PEPs in Char more likely to choose main market providers for the services over LSPs.

Quotes:

"SHOUHARDO can end, but LSPs will not."

"SHOUHARDO has helped LSPs walk, we will help them to run"

"It would be completely unfeasible to reach these people [in hard-to-reach areas] without seed agents, vaccinators and collectors" Representative from private sector [ACI seeds and livestock]

5.1.2 Service Quality

Service quality is the combined perceived performance of LSPs by community in terms of credibility, capacity and satisfaction with services. It also considers the ability of LSPs to innovate and be responsive to community needs, inclusivity and accessibility, especially for women and other vulnerable groups. Overall, in the community, 62% found quality satisfactory while 38% found quality satisfactory with scope for improvement, same for innovation and responsive to community needs. There was unanimous agreement on inclusivity and accessibility of LSPs. More women found LSP service satisfactory in both Haor and Char.

Quality: Scope for improvement

1. Sophisticated skills in disaster mitigation training
2. More technical awareness and technology-driven service provision
3. Vaccinator: Systematize vaccination program every 6 months. Vaccine box. Linkage with ULO for timely free vaccine distribution and adoption. Training on new diseases' vaccination
4. Collector: Visit frequently and assist in group crop planning. Fridge/storage
5. VA: Empower with linkages to formal financial institutions
6. Seed Agent: More varieties of seeds, especially in high-value cash crops
7. FFH: Cash crop fish production

Innovation: Examples of LSP Innovation highlighted by the community

1. Vaccinator-Uthan Baithak for vaccine awareness, goat vaccine.
2. Seed Agent: Introduction of new techniques and hands-on facilitation. Quality seeds, small purchases, delayed payment and other facilities. For homestead vegetable production: bed technique, water drainage, sack gardening and pre-flood preparations.
3. Use of Mobile Apps to serve [livestock dairy]

5.1.3 Business planning

Customer base increase (%)

Overall	91
Seed Agent	100
Shanchay Shathi	97
PCSBA	94
Vaccinator	93
Collector	92
BSP	90
Fish Fry Hawker	71

Overall, LSPs have demonstrated strong entrepreneurial skills in expanding their business with both coverage and customer base doubling with about 60% repeat customers.

Indicates appropriate selection and capacity development by project. Vaccinators have increased their coverage by 2.5 times. Seed agents have doubled their customer base.

Table 18: Customer Base increase (%)



Sanchay Sathis' coverage increase has been relatively slow, but with 90% repeat customers indicating the LSP model for financial access may have limited scalability to achieve sustainable income potential for sustained service delivery.

Overall	104
Vaccinator	154
Fish Fry Hawker	135
PCSBA	88
Collector	86
BSP	84
Seed Agent	77
Sanchay Shathi	52

Table 19: Service Coverage increase (%)

The market for seeds and animal vaccines is relatively more developed and highly competitive, resulting in lower repeat customers.

FFH is weakest among LSPs with lowest community awareness and low demand and customer base growth despite increasing coverage.

Overall	59%
Sanchay Shathi	90%
Collector	60%
BSP	60%
Fish Fry Hawker	59%
PCSBA	53%
Seed Agent	53%

Table 20: Repeat Customer (%)

5.1.4 Income Potential

LSP income as % of total income

Overall	49%
Fish Fry Hawker	115%
P-CSBA	85%
Collector	84%
Vaccinator	49%
Seed Agent	36%
Sanchay Shathi	24%
BSP (Blu Star Provider)	15%

Income change - Significant to Moderate increase (%)

Type	%
Overall	80
BSP (Blu Star Provider)	91
Seed Agent	86
Collector	81
Vaccinator	78
PCSBA	75
Sanchay Shathi	77
Fish Fry Hawker	67

Table 21: LSP Income share, sufficiency and trend

activities post-project. Sanchay Sathis were not meant to have this service as their main livelihood as per the LSP approach. In the qualitative study, responses indicate that the time and effort for this role does not match the expected return which is reflected in the relatively low response on income sufficiency and likely a case for demotivation in the future.

Sustained impact assessment: the LSP model has strong income potential with growing demand in agriculture and suitable actor selection in healthcare. Sustained impact in fisheries and financial inclusion requires further intervention for sustained motivation. Particularly for P-CSBAs and Sanchay Sathis who have been brought over from other CARE projects, these LSPs need upskilling and role expansion to better meet community needs as their services are clearly desired and appreciated by community – evidenced by high repeat customers and satisfaction with services; but that demand is not sufficiently translated to monetized opportunities to make the services financially sustainable in the long-run.

Income sufficient? [Yes %]

Overall	55
Fish Fry Hawker	75
Collector	70
Seed Agent	60
P-CSBA	56
BSP	55
Vaccinator	51
Sanchay Shathi	36

Income from LSP services as a share of respective total income is a key indicator of whether LSPs will continue with their services. There needs to be a significant contribution to maintain LSP's interest and motivation to continue with the service.

Triangulating responses from community, private and public actors to validate LSP responses, yields the following classification by LSP:

Strong sustainability: Vaccinators, seed agents and collectors have a good balance of LSP income contribution, income sufficiency and demand for sustainability.

Medium sustainability: P-CSBA and FFH have a high dependence on their LSP role for total income, but low income growth [FFH] and dissatisfaction with income sufficiency [P-CSBA] reduces sustainability as these LSPs might switch to other livelihood activities entirely.

Weak sustainability: BSPs and Sanchay Sathis have low LSP income contribution compounded with low income growth [VA] and sufficiency [BSP] which indicates these LSPs might focus on their main livelihood



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5.1.5 Enabling Support Services

	Public		Private	
	Linkage	Benefit	Linkage	Benefit
Overall	81.8	68	59.4	53.5
P-CSBA	100	93.8	100	81.2
Seed Agent	90.8	83.1	96.9	95.4
Vaccinator	100	88.1	86.4	78
BSP	90.9	27.3	81.8	63.6
Shanchay Shathi	71	56.5	30.4	24.6
Collector	64.4	47.5	22	22
Fish Fry Hawker	70.8	62.5	29.2	16.7

Table 22: Ranked LSP-wise linkage and benefits with public and private service providers (%)

Driven by SHOUHARDO's history, public sector linkages with LSP has been more successful than private sector linkage interventions.

Both public and private sector actors agree that LSPs are crucial to reaching vulnerable population in hard-to-reach areas.

In some areas, LSPs like P-CSBA and vaccinators have been recruited into local government workforce to deliver the same services.

Strong support: P-CSBA, Seed Agent, Vaccinator

Medium: BSP and Sanchay Sathi [strong in one, weak in another]

Weak: Collector and fish fry hawker [weak in both]

Both livestock vaccines [for vaccinators] and reproductive care supplies [for P-CSBA] are heavily regulated products. Thus, government linkages are more enabling than private ones for the respective LSPs.

"Not a single mother served by P-CSBAs has died in my area."
UH&FPO in Tahirpur, Sunamganj

"We are understaffed. LSPs [vaccinators] gets us to reach ten times the people – so we could finally control disease outbreaks."
ULO, Sirajganj

Sustained Impact assessment: the project has commendable public institution selection and linkage building for sustained access post-project. Project linkages lean towards inputs market with only one forward market actor. Financial access requires intervention for sustainability.

ACI [both animal and agribusiness], Square, and Lal teer are leaders as pro-poor organizations with linkages, interactions and benefits provided to LSPs, not just the agri-LSPs but also with P-CSBAs and Sanchay Sathis.

5.1.6 Network Synergies

Awareness: Model LSP and BLN (%)		Worked with other LSPs (%)		Strongest LSP collaborations (%)		
	M-LSP	BLN	Overall	59	Same LSP	86
Overall	92	82	P-CSBA	69	Vaccinator	68
Fish Fry Hawker	96	88	Seed agent	62	Seed Agent	67
Vaccinator	93	88	Collector	59	Collector	51
P-CSBA	94	81	Shanchay Shathi	57		
Shanchay Shathi	96	81	Fish Fry Hawker	46		
Seed agent	91	82	BSP	36		
Collector	90	76				
BSP	64	64				

Table 23: LSP network: awareness and collaboration



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BLN, Business Leader Network, and many LSPs are the best performing, with the area LSP network well developed with fast adoption by all LSPs except BSPs. 80% found the network effect to be positive. Fish fry hawkers have especially taken to the network Other LSPs are familiar with the approach due to prior working experiences with CARE [Vaccinators, P-CSBA and Sanchay Sathi]

Collectors and BSPs were found to be less responsive to the networking approach. 60% LSPs worked with other LSPs, with 86% of them working with same LSP type [e.g., collectors working with other collectors]. Apart from that, vaccinators, seed agents and collectors have strongest skill/interest in networking.

Sustained impact assessment: The LSP network was developed in less than a year and has had minimal time for the networking and collaborations to take hold successfully. The agri-based LSPs are likely to continue to network actively as they have clear business incentives to do so. In healthcare however, while P-CSBAs are highly interested in continuing membership, they will struggle to find collaborative ventures within the network as the BSP appears to be disinterested. Similarly in financial access, while the Sanchay Sathis are highly pro-active within the network, they are unlikely to benefit from the networking without redesigning their engagement, in terms of savings and loans/investments services that will be competitive with the current market alternative of tailored MFI products. Thus, inclusive finance requires additional intervention in networking.

5.2 LSP-wise Sustainability Findings

LSP-wise Sustainability summary

Sustained Impact: IR1 - Equitable income and food and nutrition impact

LSPs assessed: Seed Agents, Vaccinators, Collectors and Fish Fry Hawkers

The agriculture-related LSPs are likely to attain sustained impact in IR1 (Equitable income and nutritious food), building resilience and gender equity.

Seed agents and vaccinators have demonstrated strong sustainability due to community demand, high service quality, established business acumen and significant income potential. They are actively engaged with the project and are supported by the LSP network and support services.

Collectors also have a strong business case for continuity due to significant demand, especially among women, and good income potential driven by strong business skills. Their main challenge lies in engaging public and private sector stakeholders, as they are the only LSP directly working with market access. Additionally, they require a more focused engagement with the LSP network to maximize its benefits and expand their services

Fish fry hawkers require further intervention and support to sustain themselves in the long run, despite good potential income and strong public sector linkages. The service appears to be in an early stage, and the providers themselves seem to be highly dependent on the LSP role as their main source of income, something the LSP model is not originally designed for.

Sustained Impact: IR2: Sustained improvement in nutrition and financial inclusion

LSPs assessed: P-CSBA, BSP and Sanchay Sathi

P-CSBA and BSP are likely to achieve sustained impact in IR2 [nutritional status of children, girls and women] with external support from stakeholders. The P-CSBAs face a unique challenge being highly appreciated by community, public and private service providers; yet the nature of the service limits demand, their capacities and expansion resulting in insufficient income potential. With many P-CSBAs are familiar with CARE's approach, they built linkages with public and private service providers and took full advantage of the LSP network. Public service providers suggested external interventions and additional income support for P-CSBAs to continue.



BSPs are established pharmacies in the community with established business skills, part of a private sector network and trusted service providers. The LSP-specific service of GMP is a supplemental income which contributes relatively little and the concept of nutrition security, different from food security, is still growing within the community. Thus, the low income potential for BSPs might drive down interest to continue GMP services among BSP in the long-run without support from the LSP network and public sector linkages.

Sanchay Sathis are also familiar with the CARE approach and managed strong linkages. The Sanchay Sathi approach requires a long time and consistent effort compared to the return, which is likely to discourage continuation without changes to their financial skillsets and service portfolio. Overall, the financial access interventions require further intervention to continue.

5.2.1 Vaccinator

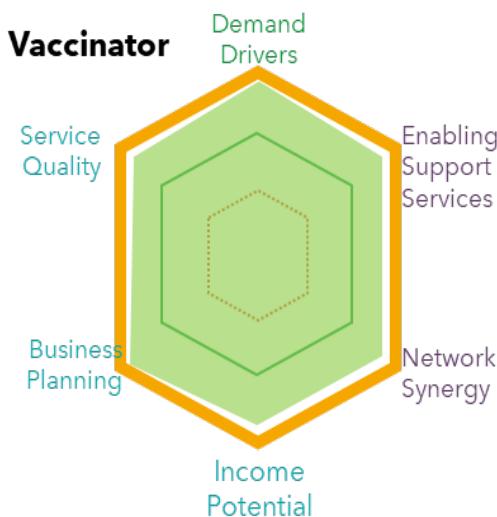


Figure 7: Vaccinator sustainability mapping

Sustained Resource

Demand drivers: the gender dimension

According to the male vaccinators there is acceptance of women working as LSP. However, their recognition depends on their service quality and they felt it would not be easy for them. The female vaccinator mentioned that the market is ready to accept women LSP. They also mentioned that they never discriminated between men and women and provided services equally.

Demand drivers (Challenges):

Coping with shocks or stresses: Regarding coping with shocks or stresses including climate change (sudden heat and cold waves) to ensure service provision they take the advice from the District Livestock Officer. During floods or thunderstorms in spite of many difficulties they use alternative transportation such as boat or banana raft to reach their destination when their service is required. These stresses persist until the flood and water logging recedes.

Future Challenges: The main challenge they foresee is the scarcity of vaccine during disease outbreaks. Especially during floods when the prevalence of foot and mouth disease increases among cattle but there is a shortage of vaccine during that time at the Livestock office. So they require help to access vaccine. However, for the female vaccinator her main challenge is improving her skills to enable her to continue her services effectively.

Sustained Service Delivery

Sustained capacity: The male livestock vaccinators felt that they have sufficient knowledge and skills to provide services as vaccinators but also welcomed new training as it would strengthen their capacity to provide the services and one vaccinator of Kurigram showed interest in Artificial Insemination (AI). However, the female poultry vaccinator of Sunamganj felt that her current capacity was not enough to provide the envisioned services and therefore needed more training. Regarding using Apps/on-line services it was found that they used Livestock Diary and Krishoker Janala. The poultry vaccinator used the FFBS (an app related to duck and chicken rearing.)

Business planning

Regarding their future, all the vaccinators mentioned expanding their business by setting up a vet medicine shop in the market and reach out to more people through their services. *"I want to have a big vaccine shop in the market. I want to invest more capital in the business. I need about 1 lakh BDT to make the business sustainable"*, Kishoreganj Vaccinator.



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Sustained Motivation:

Vaccinators who were experienced and have been already providing services in the community were headhunted by the project to provide services as LSPs. The project also selected potential female project participants and encouraged them to become vaccinators to generate income. Most of them were inspired to become vaccinators when they realized the importance of vaccination as prevention against diseases for cattle, goats and poultry. As a vaccinator from Belkuchi Upazila Sirajganj expressed, “*Once a neighbor’s cow was about to die due to a disease. Then, a doctor came and saved the cow. From that incident, I became interested to become a livestock doctor. After that I did training with an NGO as a Vaccinator*”. For a female vaccinator from Tahirpur Upazila, Sunamganj, income, independence and respect were her main motivation. “*I have been working with CARE since 2016. They contacted me to become a vaccinator LSP. Serving as an LSP felt like being independent. I got respect in the community. People liked me a lot and it became a good source of income for me*”. A vaccinator from Austogram Upazila, Kishoreganj said, “*People related to CARE came to me as I have previous experience and skills as a vaccinator and community bound. I felt honored by being an LSP, I got self-satisfaction and a higher income, which changed my life*”. Being able to provide an important service to the community, made them feel good as they gained respect from the people as well as generate income. Having been involved as an LSP of SHOUHARDO III Plus project further increased their customer base. So even when the project ends, this kind of motivation is expected to continue.

Income Potential

Floods, seasonal effects, disease outbreaks, post Eid-ul-Adha have an impact on the vaccinators' income. According to the vaccinators, disease outbreaks in general increased their income which usually happens during the months May-June and after floods. Even though they faced communication problem during floods they still provided their services. For the female vaccinator, her income depended on her capital to buy vaccine and her service provision was also hampered when her area was hit by flooding.

Sustained Access

Sustained Linkage: Vaccinators maintained linkages with private companies and the Department of Livestock Services (public services) as it helped them to learn about new product information, training, medicines, etc., as well as updated information regarding cattle disease and treatment. It also benefited them with smoother communication, network building, more business, creation reputation, etc. They also bought cheaper business inputs and got information about the market situation through them.

Enabling supporting services

SHOUHARDO III Plus provided support services like training, strengthening public and private linkages and LSP promotion. This has helped them enhance their capacity, expand their customer base and increase their services. The vaccinator from Sirajganj mentioned that during the training he also received from the project a cool-box and a gun for conducting AI.



5.2.2 Seed Agent

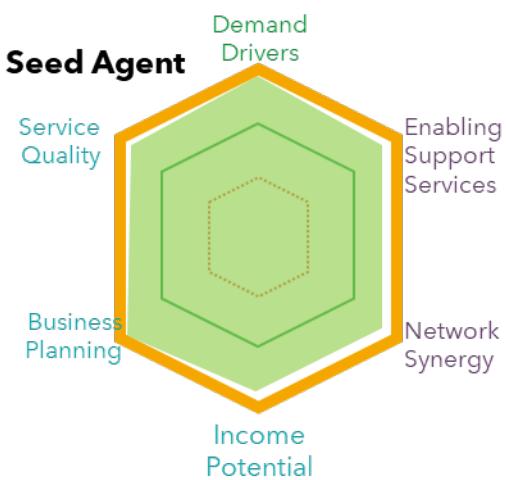


Figure 8: Seed Agent sustainability mapping

accept a woman seed seller because it would be a source of income for the woman. According to them there is no gender discrimination and they provide services equally to men and women. The Kurigram seed agent mentioned that in his shop when there were women customers, he served them first because they had other household duties.

Demand drivers (Challenges):

Coping with shocks or stresses: To cope with shocks/stresses and climate change, which is mostly floods, they adopt different strategies such as they wait for the weather to become stable, spend money from the savings, store their inputs in a safe place to protect from destruction. They also try to do more business during favorable weather conditions some also get engaged in substitute business activities to cope with the situation. *“During flooding, my transactions curbed a lot as sourcing the seeds became difficult and my sales dropped significantly. So, I waited for the weather to become stable”*, a Seed Agent from Jamalpur.

Sustained Service Delivery

Sustained capacity: They feel capable and confident as seed agent, but they also feel that there is still room for learning about modern agriculture through training and better communication with other seed agents. With the existing capacity, they are already running their business. They feel that for expanding their business they need a loan, but to repay the loan an increase in sales is necessary. Most common Apps used by them include ‘Krishoker Janala’ and ‘Livestock Diary’.

Business planning

They focused on business expansion through increasing the floor space of their existing shop, adding more variety of products and better storage facilities. A Jamalpur Seed Agent wanted to be a seed dealer to remove the middleman between him and the seed company.

Sustained Motivation

Seed Agents have been identified by the project and encouraged to provide their services as LSPs. According to them, they already have a running business, but involvement with the SHOUHARDO III Plus project has increased their reputation and they felt honored. They have more connectivity with customers and others and hence their sales have increased. The chance to do something for the community, more income, better identity, increased knowledge, more connectivity and self-esteem are their main motivation to continue their services. *“I feel honored, it has increased my reputation, my income has increased, and I have more connectivity with customers and others”* said the Seed Agent from Baniachong Upazila, Habiganj.

Sustained Demand

Sustained resource:

The seed agents buy their inputs from company dealers in the market at Upazila level. To ensure quality they buy their inputs from well-known companies. Generally, they buy seeds from Lal Teer, BRAC, ACI and pesticides from ACI, the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute(BRRI), National, Syngenta. They collect manure from the government (Department of Agricultural Extension). They also get information about seed quality from the supplier and the Sub-Assistant Agricultural Officer. Input quality is ensured through observation, customer feedback, references, experience, company reputation, etc..

Demand drivers: Gender dimension

According to them women are involved in different businesses but there were no female seed seller in their respective area. However, they felt that people would also



Income Potential

During the peak-season October – January (Bangla month - Kartik, Agrahayan, and Poush)¹ their business increased as it was the season for sowing and harvesting and increased customer contact and sales. Their sales decreased during off-peak season (May-June) and during flooding when the demand was low. In Kurigram, sales increased during the potato and paddy sowing season.

Sustained Access

Sustained Linkage: Linkages created with other seed agents through project training have benefitted them a great deal. It created opportunity to share information, market knowledge, collect inputs from one another when required. They felt that they have less chance to suffer from business losses. The Seed Agent of Kurigram mentioned that at present he has contact with 70-80 people because of the project training.

Future Challenges: Their future challenges included insufficient capital to run the business, poor quality products such as non-germinating seeds, unethical competition, etc.. For the Netrokona Seed Agent not having a trade license was his main challenge.

Enabling supporting services

Support services received from the project included capacity building training to enable them to provide better services/suggestions to the community which they felt benefited them as well as the community people. According to them, due to SHOUHARDO III Plus, their communication and internal linkages increased, access to information improved due to digital learning, and sales increased due to better connectivity and increase in customers.

5.2.3 Produce Collector

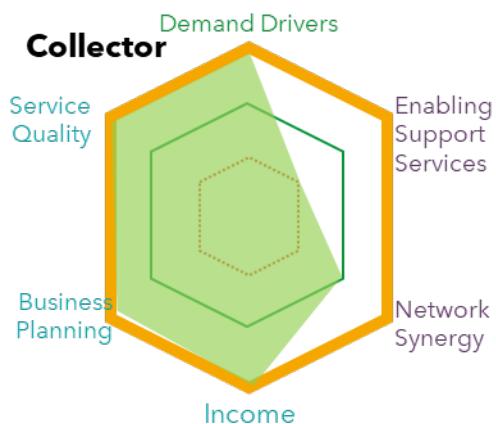


Figure 9: Collector business sustainability mapping

process of buying and selling vegetables. Their coping mechanism to shock/stresses and climate change included timely sales, communication with other stakeholders like weather situation, more hard work, shifting their holdings to a higher platform, connecting with producers and buyers through mobile phone and availing alternative transportation system (boat), etc..

Future Challenges: the challenges they foresee are irregular cash flow, shortage of capital, establishment of a shop, lack of proper storage facilities and unpredictable natural disasters.

Sustained Service Delivery

Sustained capacity: The Produce Collectors felt that their current capacity in knowledge and skills and the training provided will enable them to continue to provide services as LSP in the community. However, they felt that linkages with large companies, shop facilities, better storage facilities would enhance their capacity to provide services more efficiently. They also require loan facilities/financial assistance to expand their

Sustained Demand

Demand drivers: Gender dimension

Two of the Collectors (Jamalpur and Habiganj) opined that female LSPs are accepted by local people. On the other hand two Collectors (Sirajganj and Kishoreganj) felt that it is difficult for women to provide services as LSP due to the social structure and their responsibilities in the family. But they hoped that in the near future local people will accept women as LSP. No one faced gender discrimination and the produce collectors provided services equally to male and female customers.

Demand drivers (Challenges):

Coping with shocks or stresses: They faced hard times due to frequent floods, thunderstorms, riverbank erosion and decrease in agri-production. They were required to go to the doorsteps of every person which delayed the

¹ Kartik (October to November), Agrahayan (November to December, and Poush (December to January)



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businesses. Only one Produce Collector who had access to a smart phone mentioned using Apps like ‘Krishoker Janala’, ‘1 Network’, and ‘Livestock Diary’ as well as You Tube to get information. The rest of them found it difficult to operate Apps and therefore did not use any.

Business planning

Their business planning focus on expanding their business through involvement in more revenue generating activities, setting up their own shop, having storage facilities for which they will require financial assistance from banks and strengthening their market linkages. They also felt that they required training to enhance their technical knowledge and business skills. The Sirajganj Collector’s business plan focused on increasing his sales by selling with a minimum profit margin.

Sustained Motivation:

Vegetable sellers were contacted by the project to become Produce Collector LSPs in their communities. Their previous experience as vegetable sellers inspired them to become LSPs and they became well-known in the community and their business improved. They felt dignified and earned a good name for being able to help the producers sell their products. Selling produces to the collector saved time and transportation cost for the producers. Recognition, respect and income generation are the main factors of sustained motivation for the produce collectors.

Income Potential

Seasonally abundant vegetable production, high market demand and high-profit margin were contributing factors for increasing incomes for the Produce Collectors. Income also increased with product shortages resulting in high prices. Factors that contributed to decreased income included less market demand due to sudden floods and water logging, shortage of production, products becoming rotten due to poor storage as well as shortage of capital to buy the vegetables when the price is high. Collectors who collect ducks faced business loss due to sudden death of the ducks they bought. “*The crisis I face are shortage of money, shortage of vegetables due to low production and natural disasters*”, Produce Collector, Belkuchi Upazila, Sirajganj. “*I faced a business loss due to the death of ducks, and storage losses as my stock of potatoes got rotten*”, Produce Collector, Baniachong Upazila, Habiganj.

Sustained Access

Sustained Linkage: According to them, they benefited a lot from the linkages as their service provision has become easy and swift. Linkages improved their business due to increased connectivity and market knowledge.

Enabling supporting services

Support services from the project included more agricultural production by project participants thus creating opportunities for the collectors to run their business of buying and selling more vegetables. In addition, capacity building training provided by the project helped in creating linkage with the public and the private sector as well as other LSPs and enhancing their reputation as trustworthy people. According to them because of SHOUHARDO III plus they have gained recognition in the community.



5.2.4 Fish Fry Hawker

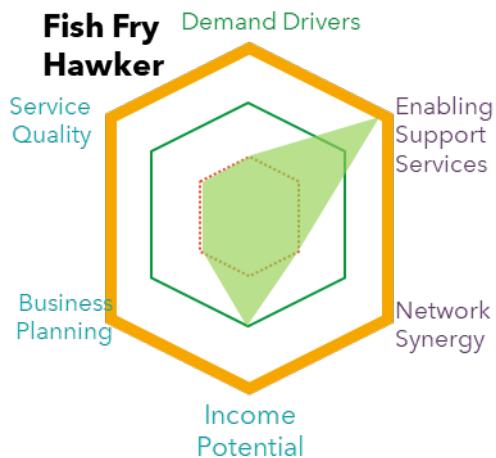


Figure 10: FFH business sustainability mapping

on the basis of gender and provided services to men and women customers equally. According to them mostly men came to buy fish fry for fish production and women came to buy fish for consumption.

Demand drivers (Challenges):

Coping with shocks or stresses: The main shock and stresses they confront is when the pond water overflows the bank due to sudden heavy rain, causing the fish to escape. In this situation they face heavy business losses. To minimize this loss, they secure the pond with nets, so that no fish can escape if the water overflows. They also need to be careful in terms of using lime proportionately according to the size of the pond, otherwise the fish will die.

Future Challenges: They did not predict any future challenges except for the shortage of capital to expand their business.

Sustained Service Delivery

Sustained capacity: The fish fry hawkers believed that their current knowledge and skills were adequate to run their business but they required financial assistance/loan to expand .Regarding using Apps, 3 mentioned that they used Apps like 'Krishoker Janala', 'Livestock Diary' and You Tube to get necessary information.

Business planning

Their business planning focused on expanding their business through leasing more ponds and establishing their own hatchery for which they required sufficient capital and technical training. The Fish Fry Hawker of Kurigram expressing his interest in going to partnership and said, "*I am going to establish a hatchery and need to lease more ponds to expand my business. If necessary I am willing to partner with someone else*".

Sustained Motivation

Potential Fish Fry Hawker/fish producers who were already in business were identified and involved in the project to provide services as LSP to PEP participants. They were invited to attend training organized by the project. They felt that getting involved with the project has been useful to them as they gained knowledge about fish fry production. Selling fish fry seemed profitable to them and their business increased due to more connectivity with community people. They gained recognition and respect in the community as Fish Fry Hawkers. A sense of self-esteem, extra income opportunity and better business are their motivational factors to continue their services as LSP which is expected to continue. "*From the SHOUHARDO training I learned how to take care of the fish fry which I did not do previously, and it proved profitable for me. My business has increased as well as earning as an LSP, because more people know me now*", Fish Fry Hawker, Rajarhat Upazila, Kurigram

Sustained Demand

Sustained resource: All the 4 Fish Fry Hawkers interviewed (Kurigram, Gaibandha, Kishoreganj and Habiganj) were found to collect fish fry from well-known private hatcheries such as Dolphin, BRAC etc.. They also take help from the government fisheries officer to link them with good sources for buying fish fry.

Demand drivers: Gender dimension

The Fish Fry Hawkers of Kurigram and Kishoreganj felt that the community and the market is ready to accept women LSPs engaged in this occupation as they will work to generate income. However, the Fish Fry Hawkers of Habiganj and Gaibandha seemed to be quite skeptical about the acceptance of women LSPs due to social structure and religious norms. They did not discriminate



Income Potential

Their sales increase during May, June, July because during these months they sell both fish fry and fish, while during December and January their sales decrease because only fish can be sold during these two months. Interestingly it was also found that they are able to do good business during the two Eid festivals as most of the people from the capital city Dhaka come to their respective home town/villages to observe Eid. During these periods as the demand for fish increases the prices for fish also goes up. Their business declines during the rainy season and natural disasters like floods.

Sustained Access

Sustained Linkage: They have contact with the Upazila Fisheries Officer from who they seek advice on aquaculture and private fish feed producing companies like CP, Quality, Megha, Agro, from where they buy fish feed. They also have contact with other LSPs. Through these linkages they were able to share information, find source for inputs and reach more community people.

Enabling supporting services

They appreciated the training support they received from the project as it enhanced their knowledge on aquaculture, created linkages with government and private sector, provided information on resources that helped them to improve their business. “*SHOUHARDO has helped me with information, resources, and training to be more skilled to help me in my work*”, said the Fish Fry Hawker of Aushtagram Upazila, Kishoreganj.

5.2.5 Sanchay Sathi

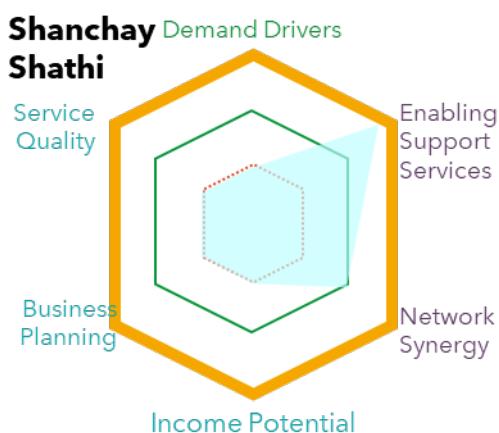


Figure 11: Sanchay Sathi business sustainability mapping

Sustained Demand

Demand drivers: Gender dimension

Sanchay Sathis are always female and in general the VSLA group members are all females. The VSLA component initiated by the project was targeted at women empowerment. The 3 Sanchay Sathis (Jamalpur, Sunamganj and Kishoreganj) felt that the market is ready to accept women to provide services as LSP. Over time, societal norms in these communities have shifted, with increased recognition of women's ability to contribute to household incomes. This shift has led to an acceptance of women providing services as LSPs, such as Sanchay Sathis. Although VSLA groups were originally formed to empower women, there is now potential interest in forming male VSLA groups in response to community needs.

Demand drivers (Challenges):

Coping with shocks or stresses: During floods they face a problem in conducting group meetings and collecting monthly installments from the group members. Therefore, they use boats as alternate transportation to visit the group members to collect monthly installments.

Future Challenges: Challenges they foresee is competition with other savings groups in the village, uncertain natural disasters, the possibility of members leaving the VSLA group and absence of a long-term plan to retain group members,

Sustained Service Delivery

Sustained capacity: Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) popularly named as Sanchay Sathi (SS) felt that their current capacity is satisfactory to provide their services as LSP. However, they felt that there is a need to develop their capacity particularly for using digitalized banking facilities and application of mobile functionalities for browsing and networking. For further capacity enhancement, the Sunamganj Sanchay Sathi mentioned linking with NGOs for generating funding like group loans which the SS can



manage on behalf of the group. In terms of using Apps, they access Sanchay Sathi, Maya Apa, Dakter Bhai, Krishoker Janala. etc., as sources of information. But mostly they use the Sanchay Sathi App for record keeping. The Kishoreganj Sanchay Sathi mentioned that she used a WhatsApp group with Sanchay Sathi members where she posted group members updates.

Business planning

Their business plans mainly focused on increasing the number of VSLA groups to be trained in digital literacy, having an office and providing more loans. They also planned to provide different services (tailoring, vaccination, etc.) to community people to generate additional income. However, none of them mentioned getting financial assistance from banks to run the VSLA groups.

Sustained Motivation

For the Sanchay Sathis, major motivational factors to provide services is income opportunity for maintaining the VSLA groups. In addition, they felt a sense of satisfaction as they gained community respect for being able to help women and young girls by creating scope for financial assistance in time of need through the village savings and loan scheme. They also have widows and elderly women in their groups. “*As an LSP I feel very honored because I have 15 groups and even people from Dhaka and the USA know me. This is a huge honor for me. I feel I am an important person now. The sense of doing something for the community particularly the women and young girls makes me happy*”, Sanchay Sathi, Tahirpur Upazila, Sunamganj.

Income Potential

Being involved in VSLA groups the women and girls are able to save and invest that money in income generating activities which helps them to become financially independent in many ways. Members' savings increased during the harvest period but decreased during natural calamities like floods. The Sanchay Sathi earned money for maintaining the groups. She was paid yearly BDT 1,500 by the group. So, her income depended on the number of VSLA groups she maintained. But there were also instances when business losses and natural disasters resulted in less savings and affected her yearly payment. “*Once my yearly payment was reduced because one group wasn't willing to pay the 1,500 Taka fee as they did not make any profit but later they gave me 1,000 Taka. This kind of crisis happens when there is a loss in business and flood*”, Sanchay Sathi. Belkuchi Upazila, Sirajganj.

Sustained Access

Sustained Linkage: Linkages created with the help of the project benefitted the Sanchay Sathi in many ways. SSs' reputation made easy access to different stakeholders particularly the local government and it paved the way for knowledge sharing as well as helping the community when required thus resulting in strong community bonding and earning community recognition and respect. “*I get help from them when I face any problem. For example, the Chairman and Member of the Union Council helped me a lot. Many of my group members did not have birth certificate or NID, the chairman helped me in this matter*” Sanchay Sathi. Belkuchi Upazila, Sirajganj.

Enabling supporting services

It was evident that they have gained recognition in the community only because of the project. They received training and equipment support (umbrella, pen, notebooks, bag, etc.) from the project to operate the VSLA groups. The project helped in connecting with the public/private sector, local government as well as other LSPs. Operating the VSLA groups efficiently enhanced their reputation as being reliable.



5.2.6 P-CSBA

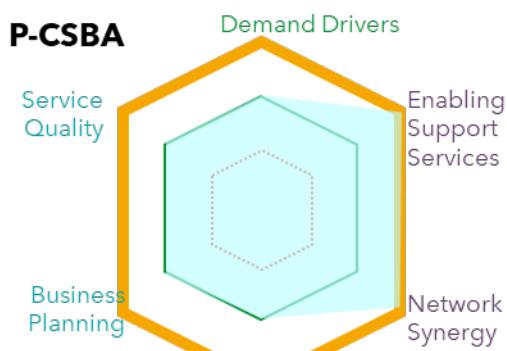


Figure 12: P-CSBA Business sustainability mapping

commute alone being a woman. To cope with these difficult situations, they used alternative transportation like local boats during floods and if the call came at night they asked a male family member to accompany them. Payment for their services varied, sometimes low and sometimes none at all. They coped with this situation by accepting the solvability of the patient.

"I have to take my husband or father in law with me in case of delivery in night because as a woman it is difficult to travel alone at night" PCSBA, Nageshwari Upazila, Kurigram. *"During flood, I find it tough to move to my customer. To cope with such a situation, I use the local boat"*, PCSBA, Ajmeriganj Upazila, Habiganj.

Future Challenges: Future challenges for the PCSBs are the lack of interest from women to use PCSBA services for child delivery at home due to the government's promotion of institutional delivery. The PCSBAs are also concerned about complications that may arise during child delivery such as convulsion, low oxygen level, high blood pressure, excessive bleeding when the patient has to be taken to the hospital immediately. They are afraid that these complications may lead to the patient's death. In addition, lack of awareness, quality of medicine and time management are also challenging for them to provide their services efficiently. They feel that CC could be an ideal place for normal delivery if oxygen and other necessary primary support are available. *"In the future, I am afraid of any critical patient. If they die, I will find it difficult to forgive myself"*, PCSBA, Habiganj.

Sustained Service Delivery

Sustained capacity: PCSBAs were selected by the project through a selection process and were provided 6 months' training in nursing institutes. After the training they began providing services in the community. However, they feel that their current capacity is not enough to provide the services, particularly when complications arise during child delivery. All the PCSBs particularly mentioned wanting to be trained on perineal stitching so that they can handle the situation when the patient in remote areas (Char) cannot be rushed to the hospital immediately. Sometimes, excessive bleeding may lead to the mother's death. They also wished for training on children diseases. *"I need more training. I can't do the stich which is necessary specially in the Char area where I provide my services. If such cases arise, I have to take the patient to the hospital immediately but it is difficult"*, PCSBA, Sundarganj Upazila, Gaibandha. 3 PCSBAs (Gaibandha, Habiganj and Netrokona) had access to smart phones and used Apps like 'Sara Platform' app, a hotline number, Dakter Bhai and MAYA. They were aware of other Apps but were not able to use them. The Kurigram PCSBA did not have a smart phone and therefore did not have access to any of these Apps.

Business planning

The PCSBAs' planning focused on increasing clients by increasing their service quality for which they required more capacity development training and necessary equipment. They also took into consideration

Sustained Demand

Demand drivers: Gender dimension

Only female PCSBAs are acceptable to provide child delivery services at household level. But for providing other services the PCSBAs feel that community people and the market is ready to accept female LSPs comprehending the need for income generation by females also. The PCSBAs did not discriminate in providing services and provided services equally to everyone irrespective of caste or religion.

Demand drivers (Challenges):

Coping with shocks or stresses: Distance, lack of transportation and natural calamities hampered their service provision. Particularly at night, it was difficult to



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marketing themselves, establishing a pharmacy with quality medicine and equipment in the local market, etc. to expand their business.

Sustained Motivation:

Income opportunity, able to help pregnant mothers, community recognition, community respect, self-esteem and a sense of self-satisfaction were the main motivational factors for the PCSBAs to continue their services as LSPs. In some cases, personal bad experience during child birth by an untrained birth attendant inspired the woman to become a trained PCSBA to provide child delivery services such as in the case of the PCSBA of Nageshwari Upazila, Kurigram. Sharing her own experience she mentioned, *“During my delivery, the untrained local birth attendant treated me very badly and she cut the perineal vein but did not tell me this. Due to this, I experienced heavy bleeding and great suffering. It was my luck that I survived. After I came to know about this, I took an oath that I would work as a trained birth attendant in the future, so that no woman has to face this kind of ordeal”*. PCSBAs usually provide ANC, PNC and Child Delivery services. Their main earning comes from child delivery. They seemed to be concerned about institutional delivery promoted by the government which will reduce their number of clients. If the number of patients decline, their motivation to continue to providing services as LSP may not continue as they would not earn enough from only ANC and PNC services.

Income Potential

More pregnancies mean more income for the PCSBAs as mentioned by the PCSBA from Netrokona that she had a higher income as more women got pregnant during COVID, during the winter season, etc.. However, for quite some time, the PCSBAs' extent of service delivery has been on the decline due to government promotion of institutional delivery and therefore the PCSBs have been experiencing low income. Though natural calamities hampered their service delivery, they earned more during natural calamities as the patient could not travel to the hospital for child delivery. *“During floods, my income increases. I work hard and I charged more when this area got hit by floods. I know I am a key service provider in this community because there is no one like me in this area.”*, PCSBA, Ajmeriganj Upazila, Habiganj.

Sustained Access

Sustained Linkage: The PCSBAs have links in the health sector such as the Upazila Health Complex (UHC) and local pharmacies. They refer patients when they identify complications and take technical advice from health professionals. When particular medicines are not available, they take advice from the local doctors/medicine shops about alternative medicines. Because of their linkage with the health sector they have earned community respect and recognition.

Enabling supporting services

The PCSBAs received 6 months' extensive training and a delivery kit to provide their services. Due to project support they were able to maintain links with the government's health sector at Upazila level and local pharmacies to buy their inputs. The knowledge and skill acquired through the training and encouragement by the project staff enabled them to provide their services and created scope for income generation. *“I learned many things through SHOUHARDO and now working. I feel very good and thankful to SHOUHARDO. The program staff always encourage me to work which give me confidence to work more sincerely”* PCSBA, Gaibandha.



5.2.7 Blue Star Provider

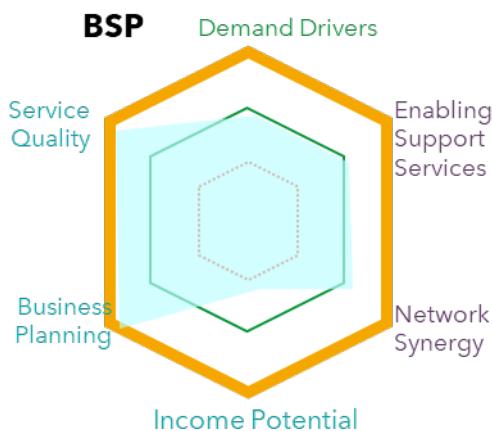


Figure 13 BSP Business sustainability mapping

years back, the products in his medicine shop were damaged due to flood. But he coped and recovered from this shock through hard work.

Future Challenges: They did not see any future challenges except for more competition, unexpected climate and political situation changes.

Sustained Demand

Demand drivers: Gender dimension

Female health service providers are always accepted by people to provide checkups for pregnant women. Moreover, women prefer to have women health service provider for gynecological related problems. But for other health problems there is no problem in accepting male health service providers. Without any discrimination, the BSPs provide health service equally to all patients irrespective of gender, caste, race and religion.

Demand drivers (Challenges):

Coping with shocks or stresses: With fewer customers during rain or storms, their services were slightly affected otherwise they did not face problems during natural calamities. However, the Netrokona BSP informed that two

years back, the products in his medicine shop were damaged due to flood. But he coped and recovered from this shock through hard work.

Future Challenges: They did not see any future challenges except for more competition, unexpected climate and political situation changes.

Sustained Service Delivery

Sustained capacity: SMC Blue Star Providers who are paramedics, having an established pharmacy and providing services for a long time were selected by the project to provide services as LSPs. Over the years, the Blue Star Providers participated in many trainings organized by the government and pharmaceutical companies. Blue Star Providers have been assisting the project as LSP for implementing the project's GMP component. The project also provided them with weight and height scales. These LSPs felt that their current capacity was adequate to provide their services, but they always welcomed new training opportunities. However, none of them used any Apps.

Business planning

Their business mainly focused on expansion of their existing shop, adding more health services and having an assistant in the shop. For attracting more customers, their plan also includes maintaining a health professional like a MBBS doctor for providing treatment to the patients and marketing through loud speaker campaigns.

Sustained Motivation

With established pharmacies, they are already earning good money. When they were contacted by the project for implementation of GMP services they became inspired as it gave them opportunity to serve children. Being involved with the project earned them more community respect, more connectivity with the people and increased their customer base and their business. Having to do something for the community gave them a sense of self-worthiness. This kind of motivation is expected to continue.

"There are many child patients in this area, and as a LSP I can provide good service to the people, that's why I chose to become an LSP. I am trained and experienced which gives me confidence to provide good service. That's why people come for my service and also respect me. My income also increased", Blue Star Provider, Belkuchi Upazila, Sirajganj

Income Potential

All the 4 BSPs interviewed mentioned that their business was improving as more people came for medicine after they became involved with the SHOUHARDO III Plus project. Usually they had a steady income all year round but when there was a disease outbreak such as fever, cold, cough, etc., their income increased.



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However, sometimes during bad weather and natural calamities their income decreased as fewer customers came to the shop.

Sustained Access

Sustained Linkage: They maintain contacts with other paramedics and doctors/specialists. When they could not solve health problems they communicate with their contacts for advice or referred the patient to them. Maintaining linkages with the community benefited them a great deal as their patients/customers base increased. Their linkages with the pharmaceutical companies also provided opportunities for knowledge sharing on health issues and new medicines.

Enabling supporting services

Though Blue Star Providers already had an established business, they received equipment support such as a weight scale, a height scale and growth monitoring cards from the project. The influence of SHOUHARDO III Plus helped further in increasing their reputation and customer base.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

From PEP households to communities, LSPs, public and private service providers, all respondents had recommendations to improve the efficacy and sustainability of LSPs. Our assessment classified them into relevant recommendations to increase the design relevance and efficacy of the LSP model to better achieve the key sustainability outcomes of sustained service utilization and continued behavior.

7.1 Sustained service utilization

7.1.1 Recommendations within the current model

LSP type	Recommendations
General	More Female LSPs. Government certified. Market-relevant. More consistency in quality among LSPs Bicycles for LSPs so can greatly expand their service coverage and customers base
Seed Agent	Climate smart agri-inputs and cash crops seeds
Vaccinator	Up-to-date vaccines and animal healthcare services All to be AI injectors and certified animal doctors [vets] Vaccine gun and cool box Systemize vaccination program every 6 months or when recommended Timely free vaccine distribution and adoption with ULO. Trained on new diseases vaccination
Collector	Transportation facilities for produce [Haor] Wholesaler connection [Male] Market-responsive group crop planning Fridge/storage facilities for vegetables
Fish Fry Hawker	Cash-crop fish fry
P-CSBA	Expanded services [Adult-care (NCD), water purifying tablet, etc.; Haor Female] with better equipment and medicine supplies as a Community Clinic extension [Char Male] Certified as Govt. Health and Nutrition info volunteers for women and children and providing wider range of healthcare services Iron + Calcium tablet pre-provisioning with card system



BSP	
Sanchay Sathi	<p>Formalized crisis loan products with group investment plans for periodic crises linked to formal banking [from Male groups in Haor]</p> <p>Savings and related investments [Haor]</p> <p>Extension agent for digital financial services including digital loan management [Private Sector]</p>

7.1.2 Recommendations outside of the current LSP model

Recommendations

LSPs as Government Crisis Volunteers:

Disaster Response, mitigation and recovery services during floods and extended water logging:
Example of services:

- Safe drinking water [low iron, pucca tubewell etc.]
- Sanitary latrine [pucca]
- Resistant education facilities to continue children's education
- Flood shelter for livestock
- Flood shelters for people
- Disaster mitigation training

Employment Generation and diversification:

Common response, with variations:

- Alternative jobs/income generation activity during flood months
- Employment linkage with garments factories nearby [for Char]
- Training on local sweet production for a more localized economy
- Continuing informal education for other employable skills

Connectivity and transportation services:

Adaptive to periodic natural disasters like floods and river erosion. Example of services:

- High culverts which do not submerge during floods
- Post-flood road repairs
- Boats and vans designed for carrying fragile produce [e.g.: vegetables, poultry, etc.]

LSPs recognized by Govt. facilities and services: Get services without political connections or bribing, medical equipment and medicines at community clinics

7.2 Sustained Behaviors

7.2.1 Recommendations on the LSP model from public service providers

Recommendations

- . General: Further investment in capacity building to make LSPs equivalent to government service agent counterparts [e.g., P-CSBA equivalent to Govt. HA and FWA]
- . Upazila -level government department involvement in participant selection and project implementation planning.
- . Relevant government departments can provide supervision, further training; but only after they have established themselves in the community
- . Conduct policy-level interventions as government works top-down



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IR1 specific: Certified education, better communication skills. Combine training sessions with Govt. counterparts, mutual information sharing platform [e.g., joint patient list]
Joint research project with government into new seed/plant varieties
Livestock: more frequent involvement of government officers in implementation, higher honorariums.
Recognized as a separate position like vaccinators for children.

IR2 specific: P-CSBAs need to be certified and recognized as healthcare providers. Bringing quality diagnostics down to community level. Integration with Community Clinics. Joint coordinated funding by local NGOs to financially support P-CSBAs

Financial Access: Not available

7.2.2 Recommendations on the LSP model from private service providers

Recommendations

General: Reduce cost of service delivery to PEP in hard-to-reach area and private sector will increase investment and services.

LSPs are best suited to disseminate market-relevant information to change behaviors

Expertise in mobile/online-based approach is crucial to overcome the hard-to-reach areas challenge

Agri: Focus on forward market linkages. Build credibility with certification. Capitalize on increased food price inflation with increased farmgate produce price – reduce intermediaries' role.

Livestock: Selective deregulation in vaccine and animal medicine markets.

Health: Build credibility within community.

Linkage with doctors' network and health facilities. An inclusive and equitable paid referral service.

Develop as health insurance agents.

Linking food markets with nutrition outcomes.

Financial Access: Transform Sanchay Sathis as digital financial services extension agents.

PEP relevant group investment and savings-backed loan products.

Build on established MFIs and agent banking services in area.

Serve as financial management advisor to community.

7.3 Program Design Recommendations

Overall, the program in this phase focused on the LSP approach to drive service utilization conducive to behavior change leading to resilience food security. The design indicates fast adoption at community level as it capitalizes on resources available within communities and selecting service providers who are familiar within communities. In addition, the selection was appropriate for matching the required local service to the core income source/business for the LSP, creating synergies. These aspects should be considered in future resilience food security activities.

Considering the market-based approach, this program had a strong input-heavy focus on LSPs with limited focus on forward markets. Consequently, while food prices spiked significantly in consumer markets, it did not result in equivalent rises in produce prices for the participants, as the forward market linkage was not sufficiently developed to strengthen the bargaining power of producers. Secondly, the market-based approach should be supplemented with social behavior interventions to achieve equitable outcomes for resilient food security. Specifically, outcomes around women's mobility and decision-making are crucial in achieving resilience for women. Lastly, while designing linkages with public and private sectors, it should balance the input/supply chain actors with forward market actors for a more effective market-based approach.



ANNEXES

Annex 1: SHOUHARDO III Plus Theory of Change and Implementation strategy

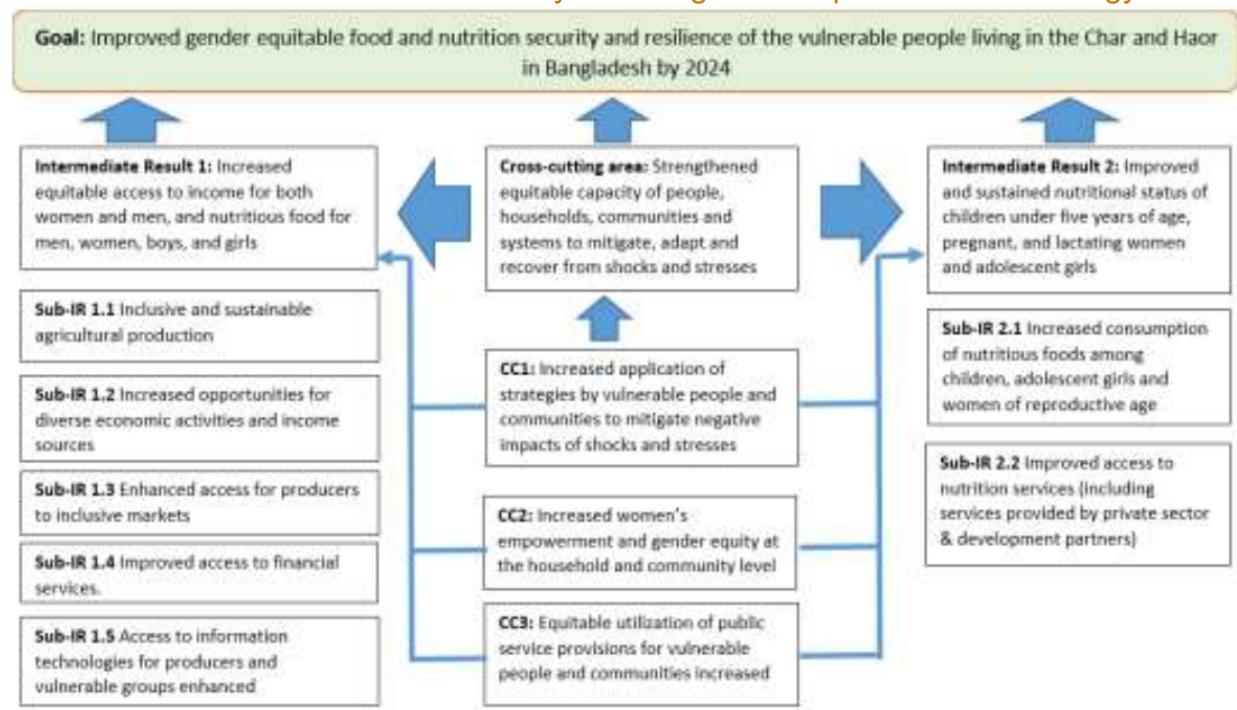


Figure 14: SHOUHARDO III Theory of Change

Overview: Key aspects of SHOIII Plus implementation strategy



Figure 15: SHOIII Plus Implementation Strategy

i <https://tradingeconomics.com/bangladesh/food-inflation>

ii <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/fertiliser-price-increased-105-sugar-60-bangladesh-russia-ukraine-war-report-658838>