ABOUT SAPLING

The Sustainable Agriculture and Production Linked to Improved Nutrition Status, Resilience and Gender Equity, (SAPLING) is a six-year, USAID-funded Resilience Food Security Activity. The program commenced in October 2015 and has since worked with over 57,000 households in Bandarban District of the Chittagong Hill Tracts region. The program supports the Government of Bangladesh to improve gender-equitable food security, nutrition, and resilience of vulnerable households.

USING A MULTI-SECTORAL APPROACH, SAPLING HAS:

- Increased household access to diverse and nutritious foods
- Promoted maternal and child health and nutrition
- Improved household and community resilience
In November 2017, SAPLING completed a household census (HHC) and well-being analysis as part of its body of formative research. The HHC was used to inform the project about the participant population and community structures.

The specific objectives of the household census, were to identify:

01 Demographic information of all households
02 Eligible SAPLING participants
03 Available service providers and education, health, and market facilities
04 Potable water facilities

HHC qualitative and quantitative methods used:

01 Survey
02 Transect walks
03 Social maps
04 Wellbeing analysis
05 Household lists
06 Questionnaires

SAPLING enumerators were from the Chittagong Hill Tracts, had experience working with local communities, and had the appropriate language skills.

HOUSEHOLD CENSUS FINDINGS

A total of 57,004 households were surveyed from 1,577 villages (paras) in the five SAPLING sub-districts (upazilas). Urban areas where program activities were not planned were excluded, along with 36 villages where security and/or extreme remoteness made it impossible for staff entry.

Over 90% of households reported living in their sub-district for more than five years. Almost one-quarter of the sample (25%) was under five years of age. Adolescent girls (aged 10-19) also accounted for a significant percentage of the total population at 11%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population characteristics</th>
<th>Ethnicities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL POPULATION OF 5 SUB-DISTRICTS</td>
<td>There are 12 ethnic groups in Bandarban District, each with their own cultures and languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>265,992</td>
<td>Bengali households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENDER RATIOS</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women: 49%</td>
<td>26,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men: 51%</td>
<td>Intsex: 0.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOST POPULATED UPAZILA</td>
<td>1% or 578 households had members of more than one ethnic group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lama: 116,625</td>
<td>11% or 6,320 households were headed by women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE</td>
<td>14% of households in Lama were headed by women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>55% of respondents were married</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| LOWEST AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE | 47% average literacy rate (lower than national average of 73%)
| 4.43 in Lama | "http://uis.unesco.org/country/BD |
| HIGHEST AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE | 5.06 in Ruma |

¹http://uis.unesco.org/country/BD
Sources of income
The most prevalent primary source of income was jhum farming, which is a traditional form of shifting agriculture, practiced by ethnic minority groups. Jhum farming was followed by unskilled labor, paddy farming, agriculture day labor, other forms of farming, small entrepreneurship, and skilled labor.

Primary income sources by region

### ACCESS TO ASSETS, SERVICES, AND FACILITIES

**Mobile phone access**
- 66% households surveyed owned a mobile phone
- 67% households surveyed had access to mobile phones
- 73% households in Lama owned mobile phones
- 47% households in Thanchi owned mobile phones
- 88% households in the Bandarban municipality (pourashava) of Bandarban Sadar had mobile phones
- 6% households in the Rekmari union of Thanchi had mobile phones

**Electricity**
- 28% (compared to 76% national average) households on average had access to consistent electricity supply
- 48% households in Bandarban Sadar had access to consistent electricity supply
- 3% households in Thanchi had access to consistent electricity supply
- 37% through solar and other sources
- 14% households on average owned radios and televisions
Access to improved sanitation and safe drinking water

- 8% households reported improved sanitation access (access to covered toilets)
- 58% households reported access to safe water

Access to safe water per sub-district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-district</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lama</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandarban Sadar</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowangchari</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruma</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanchi</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Savings

Using a form of savings was low, with only 31% of households reporting having any form of savings. Of the households that had savings, the majority had savings in bank accounts (51% of households), and microfinance institutions (56% households). Only 15% of total households saved through a savings group.

Disasters

- 27% households reported to have experienced some form of disaster in the previous 5 years
- 54% households in Thanchi reported to have suffered from disasters in the previous 5 years
- 19% households in Bandarban Sadar reported to have suffered from disasters in the previous 5 years
- 30% households lost livestock to disease in the previous 5 years
- 24% households experienced excessive flooding in the previous 5 years
- 21% of households experienced animal attacks on crops in the previous 5 years

Jhum cultivation

Jhum cultivation was one of the most significant sources of income among ethnic minority households. This form of cultivation involves shifting cultivation of plots which are often located far from the household.

- 29% households across 5 upazilas engaged in jhum cultivation
- 78% households in Ruma were engaged in jhum cultivation
- 73% households in Thanchi were engaged in jhum cultivation
- 59% households in Rowangchari were engaged in jhum cultivation

Livestock rearing

Poultry, cow/buffalo, and goat/sheep rearing was a significant livelihood activity for many households.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Livestock Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goat/sheep</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cow/buffalo</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</table>

Conclusion

SAPLING’s HHC informed targeted, focused interventions based on participant and community needs. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods allowed for a rich variety of information to be collected to better inform the project about participant’s lives and needs.

This document is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Hellen Keller Intl and do not necessarily reflect the view of USAID or the United States Government.