

## Improved Water Supplies

**When is a water supply not just a water supply? When it creates a whole new vision of the future for a family.**

Shahida proudly points out her two healthy bulls, munching fodder peacefully in their shaded stall. *“With the money I made from selling the cow that CLP gave me, I bought two more,”* she says, smiling. The cows are oblivious, content with their lot, fodder and water laid on for them, just like CLP recommends.

All around, there are the tell-tale signs of prosperity and CLP’s assistance. A smart chicken coop in the corner; banana plants and other pit crops growing around the homestead; even the very ground that she’s standing on is a CLP-raised plinth, keeping her and her family above the highest known flood-level in the area.

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But pride of place is given to the water pump. Just to the right of her house, it is within easy reach of everyone in the household, as well as other members of the community. The new mechanism gleams with



*Shahida with her daughter. Since receiving an improved water supply and other assistance from the CLP, Shahida and her family have created a whole new vision of their future.*



*Shahida with her tubewell in the background. Although CLP participants own the tubewell, they do so on the understanding that neighbours can also use it. This spreads the benefits throughout the community.*

droplets; it has obviously been used recently. The concrete platform is freshly washed, guarding the 40-foot-deep tubewell from contamination that could otherwise seep back down to the groundwater.

*“I used to have to get water from far away,”* says Shahida, *“unless I wanted to use river water.”* She shakes her head; she knows that river water is not a good option. She knew it even back then, but didn’t always have a choice. *“Every day I would have to go four, five, maybe six times to get water. It would take me between two and four hours every day, depending on how much water I needed. It was hard, very tiring. And sometimes I fell because of the weight of the water, and the difficulty in watching my feet. I would injure myself and then also have to go back to collect more water because I had spilled what I was carrying.”*

Then came the CLP and their infrastructure team. A tubewell was constructed for her, tested to check that the naturally-occurring level of arsenic was low, and capped with concrete to keep the water contamination-free. *“Now I have extra hours every day,”* she says, smiling happily. *“I do extra cleaning of my house, I help my children with their studies, and sometimes I do some sewing to make extra money.”*

This is not the only benefit. The concrete platform has been built to channel waste water away from the



*A neighbour of Shahida's pumping water for herself. Shahida will also benefit. Any spilled water is channelled into her homestead garden, helping to irrigate her crops and fruit trees. Minimum waste for maximum benefit!*

house. But ingeniously, it directs it straight into the household vegetable garden next door. Vegetables, salad plants, fruit trees and herbs flourish, the simple channels of the irrigation system distributing the leftover water evenly across the crops.

*"The family does not get sick so often now,"* says Shahida, as she shooes a chicken away from her pan of water. *"Before, we would get dysentery many times every year. Now, I have not been sick for a long time."* This is great

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news, not just because it means the family suffers less from illness. When people have dysentery or other infections, their bodies may not always get the maximum nutrition from the food they eat. Having better water therefore helps with food security as well as with health. The crops that Shahida is growing with the leftover water will therefore benefit her and her children even more now that they are healthier – a virtuous circle. She smiles and nods and says, *"Now my plan is to focus on my children's education. I want them to be successful!"*

It turns out that the CLP has provided much more than a source of water, they have helped Shahida and her family create a vision for the future that would have seemed unachievable a few short months ago.



*Now that Shahida is no longer among the extreme poor, she has extra time and income to dream. "I want to concentrate on my children's education," she said. "I want them to be successful!"*