



A Vision for Just and Sustainable Food Systems: The CARE 2020 Food and Nutrition Security Strategy



Introduction

As the world continues its trend of rising inequality, increasingly unjust and broken food systems have led to over 800 million people going hungry today. This trend, if not addressed, will result in a staggering 1.4 billion food insecure people by 2050. CARE knows that just and sustainable food systems are possible, but only if we actively address injustice and build systems that serve the needs of the entire global population.

Our goal is to improve the food and nutrition security of 50 million people by 2050, and aggressively address the injustices in global food systems. In keeping with CARE's roles, we focus on directly saving lives and promoting long-term development through our programs, and multiplying impact through evidence and influencing at a global scale. Our vision is a world free of hunger today and for generations to come.

How do we do this? We focus on building SuPER¹ food systems that address the needs of today's world, and the needs of future generations.

SuPER Food Systems are:

Sustainable: Grounded in healthy ecosystems, stable, accountable and enduring institutions and sustainable financing.

Productive: Increases smallholder farmer's production levels and the profit earned through intensification that increases returns on investment, including of labor, by farmers, results in nutritionally balanced diets, and is climate 'smart'.

Equitable: Enables equal rights, opportunities, resources and rewards for poor and vulnerable people, with a special focus on the needs and constraints of women, and supporting access to affordable nutritious food by rural and urban consumers. This includes equality within the household, within communities, and across local and global value chains.

Resilient: Allows individuals, families, communities and systems to be able to withstand shocks and stresses, including climate impacts and other risks.

CARE's full SuPER Framework is available [here](#).

This Document's Purpose

[CARE's 2020 Program Strategy](#) commits CARE to supporting 150 million of the most vulnerable people worldwide, and includes a goal to reach 50 million poor and vulnerable women, girls, men and boys to increase their food and nutrition security and their resilience to climate change. This provides an opportunity to consider CARE's vision of achieving global food and nutrition security in the context of increasing frequency and intensity of conflicts and natural disasters, pervasive inequity, population growth, increasing climate change and variability, and a depleting natural resource base.

As food and nutrition security is one of the key outcome areas for CARE 2020, this strategy document provides a framework for our food and nutrition security work in an increasingly vulnerable world. Building on the detailed CI 2010 Food and Nutrition Security Strategyⁱⁱⁱ, this document brings together the best of CARE's knowledge, expertise and programming to achieve our goals of saving lives, fighting poverty and social injustice.

The Importance of Food and Nutrition Security & Resilience to Climate Change

The CARE 2020 Program Strategy acknowledges *rising food and nutrition insecurity in the face of climate change as a defining challenge of the 21st century*. Gender inequalities and climate change are major contributors to rising food and nutrition insecurity, which increase poverty, vulnerability, and injustice.

Widespread food and nutrition insecurity is closely linked to gender inequality and the *low social and educational status of women*. Evidence from a number of sources, as well as CARE's analysis of the underlying causes of poverty across its programs around the world, overwhelmingly demonstrate that gender discrimination - or the denial of women's basic human rights - is one of the major causes of poverty and food and nutrition insecurity. Women play key roles in feeding the world (as farmers, caregivers, producers) but have unequal access

to food and to the resources, services and assets that could increase their yields and incomes or caregiving skills. While men control household resources, social norms also exclude them from caregiving responsibilities and nutrition information, leading to sub-optimal health and feeding practices and distribution of resources within the household.

For many women, poverty doesn't just mean scarcity and want. It means rights denied, opportunities curtailed and voices silenced. The benefits of women's empowerment are not limited to women. Global evidence suggests that men and women in more equitable societies are, on average, wealthier, healthier, and better educated than in countries where women are most marginalized. We know that if women farmers had the same access to resources as men, the number of hungry people in the world could be reduced by up to 150 million people.^{iv} We work with women, girls, boys and men to free women's potential to the benefit of society as a whole.

Theory of Change for Food & Nutrition Security and Resilience to Climate Change

CARE's Food and Nutrition Security Theory of Change (see below) guides our work to reach 50 million people by 2020, build just and sustainable food systems, and scale up our impact for the future.

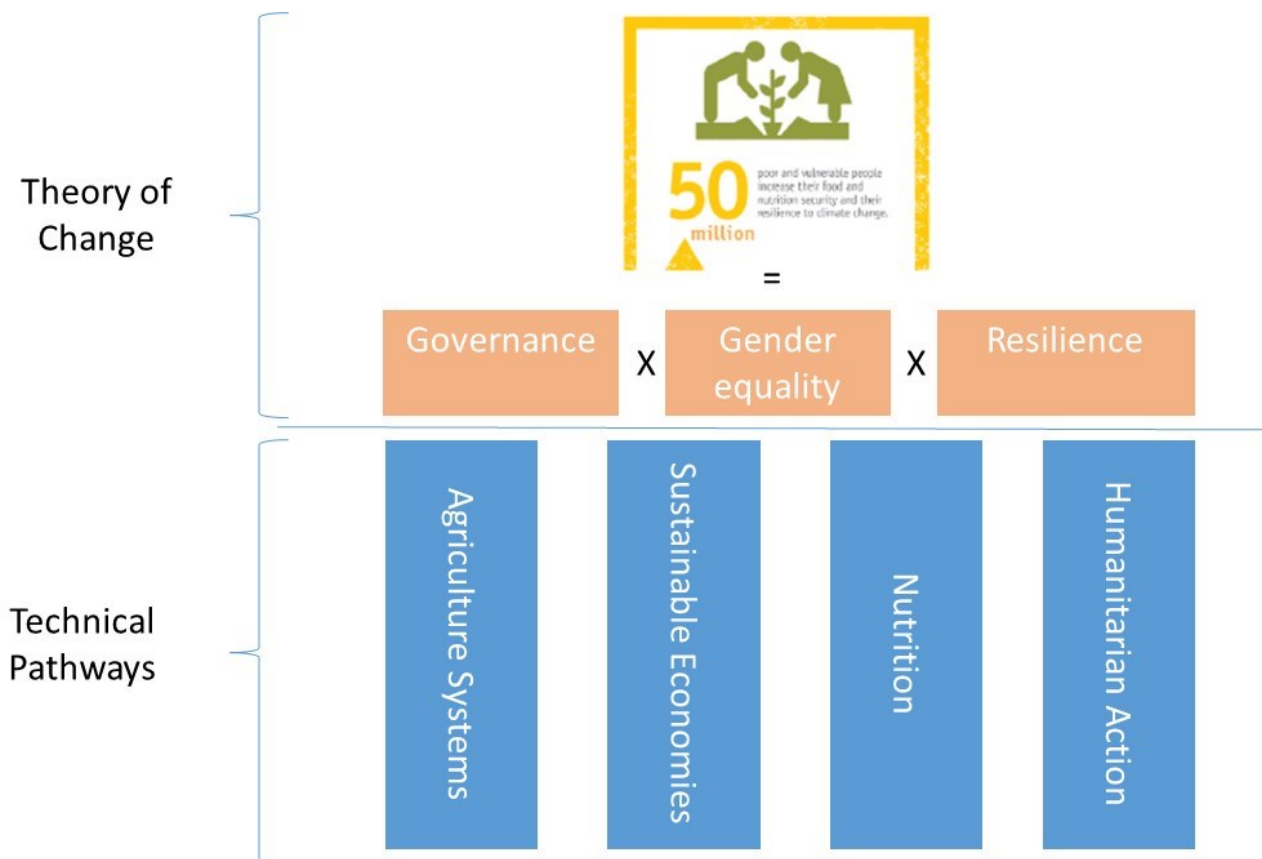
Incorporating CARE's key approaches of governance, gender equality, and resilience into each of our food and nutrition security programs and in all of our advocacy and influencing efforts, CARE will work to build SuPER food systems. Governance, gender equality, and resilience are so central to all of CARE's programming that no intervention in food and nutrition security could be complete without each of them. The section on CARE's Roles further explains these critical components of our Theory of Change.

Our Technical Pathways

Our Theory of Change rests on four pathways of technical expertise: agriculture systems, sustainable economies, nutrition, and humanitarian action. These are not separate activities, but rather interlocking pieces that together contribute to just and sustainable food systems, when supporting our key approaches.

Nutrition

In addition to supporting our goal of improving the food



and nutrition security of 50 million people, the nutrition pathway contributes to serving 100 million women and girls exercise their rights to sexual, reproductive and maternal rights and a life free from violence, as set out in the CI Program Strategy. Undernutrition has a multitude of short-term consequences. It impairs girls' and boys' physical and cognitive development, weakens the immune system making them more vulnerable to chronic disease in their adult life, and increases the risk of morbidity and mortality.

The economic cost of undernutrition has been estimated to be 2-8% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).^v CARE will focus on **reducing the impact of malnutrition in women, infants and children recognizing food security, agriculture systems, climate change resilience, livelihoods, health, care practices and gender equality as key factors to ensure a positive nutritional status.** This includes **strengthening the capacity of country-level partners** to manage and promote gender sensitive community nutrition programs, and **addressing gender and power inequalities** that affect the nutritional status of women and men, girls and boys.

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Sustainable Economies

In conjunction with CARE's work on the outcome area of women's economic empowerment, CARE aims to support creating employment and increase the income of its impact population and contribute to their food and nutrition security. This includes work supporting women to make use of markets to enable them to better protect themselves, and to respond to and recover from crises.

CARE's work in this sector focuses on helping build asset bases, develop skills, access markets, and build coping mechanisms to respond to shocks. We promote an **inclusive value chain approach that is responsive to climate change and the environment** and includes a focus on women in the value chain. This includes

innovative methods for **engaging and influencing the private sector** to create dignified employment and income opportunities for poor people, and equal spaces for men and women in value chains. We also focus on promoting **access to inclusive financial services** to catalyze sustainable economic participation for women and men.

Agriculture Systems

Context appropriate solutions and innovative approaches are fundamental in agriculture systems, particularly under changing climate conditions and market dynamics. Not only does this require CARE to conduct careful situational analysis that considers gender and power inequalities, but also to design programs that empower male and female farmers with options, information and knowledge to make good decisions.

CARE will work to strengthen sustainable, climate-resilient smallholderⁱⁱ agriculture systems to improve food and nutrition security for producers, workers and consumers—male and female, urban and rural. Our agriculture interventions will promote sustainable and nutrition-sensitive intensification that increases yields, builds adaptive capacity in the face of climate change and preserves and enhances ecosystems. We also focus on building agriculture systems that are resilient to increasingly frequent and intense shocks. We aim to support agriculture systems that support people today and in the future, and help vulnerable people all over the world realize their right to food.

Humanitarian Action

In the humanitarian space, CARE focuses on providing immediate support that can contribute and is linked to long-term sustainability. Our activities will be based on robust assessment, particularly of vulnerable women and girls, and applying **gender sensitive humanitarian response approaches that support gender equality and women's empowerment, and contribute to broader global learning.** CARE recognizes that gender issues both exacerbate and are exacerbated by humanitarian crises, so we promote changes to deep gender biases that affect food security across all humanitarian and development activities.

CARE commits to prepare for shocks and stresses with information and planning systems to monitor contributing factors for vulnerabilities and capacities, including climate vulnerabilities. We also commit to effectively respond to emergencies with quality food and nutrition security interventions that meet the needs of women, girls, men and boys and contribute to sustainable recovery that builds community resilience to

risks, such as conflict or climate change. We also work to collaborate with the people affected to ensure their participation in decision-making, and create mechanisms for accountability.

CARE's Roles in Achieving Food and Nutrition Security and Resilience to Climate Change

Humanitarian Action: CARE commits to ensuring timely and effective emergency food security interventions that can equally save the lives of women, girls, men and boys; reduce suffering, protect livelihoods, and enhance resilience, while supporting women's and girls' empowerment and long-term poverty and vulnerability reduction. We know that the populations we serve move between crisis and stable situations— often with increasing frequency due to climate change—and that it is critical to build development programming that makes communities more resilient to shocks, and humanitarian actions that promote long-term sustainability in systems as well as addressing immediate needs

Promoting Lasting Change and Innovative Solutions: CARE's long-term food and nutrition security and resilience to climate change programs focus on the goals related to nutrition, sustainable economies, and sustainable agricultural systems in order to build

communities' and individuals' abilities to realize their right to available and accessible quality nutritious food. Research and learning about key blockages in agricultural production, climate smart and gender-appropriate technology, or the politics of land governance enable CARE to pilot innovative solutions and demonstrate successful approaches that meet the needs of poor and vulnerable women, girls, men and boys.

Climate change and increasing frequency of shocks are only two trends that will be critical to making CARE's work relevant now and in 2050. Two other trends that food systems are facing are the increasing importance of youth as a demographic, and the urbanization of populations. CARE has innovative pilots and work in these areas, and a rich set of possibilities to explore and scale up. In the next five years, CARE will use its pilot programs with youth and urban consumers to generate evidence, develop and scale up approaches, and multiply impact across food systems that meet the right to food for everyone—urban and rural, youth, and producers and consumers.

Multiplying Impact: Our current food and nutrition programming reaches 5.2 million people in humanitarian and development contexts through 326 programs in 58 countries. While we are proud of this accomplishment, to truly achieve just and sustainable food systems, CARE cannot act alone. One of our key activities is to strengthen the capacity of country-level partners (civil





society, government, academia, and private sector) to manage and promote gender-sensitive community food and nutrition programs. CARE will multiply its impact by bringing the learning from our own evidence and our partners' programs into processes and decisions for policy change at national and global levels.

Multiplying impact means advocacy with governments, donors, the private sector, partners, and all power-holders in food systems to promote pro-poor policies, and especially focus on the rights of women and girls. To multiply impact, CARE looks at our relationships with power holders through the lens of:

- **Impact:** How can we leverage partnerships and promote changes in our programs and among power-holders that will increase positive impacts for the poor, especially women and girls?
- **Influence:** How can we and our partners constructively inform and shape business practice by playing the role of 'critical friend' to push power-holders to be more just and sustainable in their actions?
- **Investment:** How can we work with power holders for financial and non-financial support to CARE's mission and increase income for poor people?

CARE prioritizes evidence-based advocacy, recognizing that our ability to credibly comment on and influence policy and practice stems from decades of experience and best practices generated in program implemented with partners. We also focus on getting poor women and men, boys and girls a seat at the table to make decisions. With leadership and global coordination, CARE can ensure that global and national advocacy efforts are not a loose collection of efforts, but are mutually reinforcing with unified messages to deliver impact that is more than the sum of its parts.

The CARE Approach

The CARE 2020 program strategy incorporates 3 core approaches for reducing poverty and fighting inequality that are key to Food and Nutrition Security.

Strengthening Gender Equality and Women's Voice

Food systems cannot be just and sustainable if they do not have gender equality and women's empowerment at their heart. In order to achieve CARE's vision of gender-just food systems^{vi}, CARE will focus on transforming the underlying gender inequalities and social norms to build women's agency and autonomy as caregivers, producers and market actors, form more equitable relationships at the household levels, and create an enabling environment and equitable

institutions for ensuring women's rights as human rights.

Key change levers are:

- Institutionalizing gender and diversity management so that staff are better prepared to address gender inequality in their work and own lives;
- Building capacity in partner organizations to work for gender equitable outcomes;
- Empowering women through collective action, resource and information access, and leadership training;
- Engaging men and boys in promoting gender-just food and nutrition security;
- Involving power holders to understand and re-envision gender norms around food and nutrition.

Each technical pathway for food and nutrition security must identify and address key related gender issues. To do this, the strategy calls for food and nutrition security and climate change programming to use a combination of gender integrated and gender specific work in the key domains, with all our work based on a solid gender analysis. Both CARE's FNS and Climate Change strategies build on CARE's gender empowerment strategies.

Promoting Inclusive Governance

Recognizing governance^{vii} is critical to women, girls, men and boys equally accessing their rights, including the right to food and all of the rights that help achieve food and nutrition security, CARE works to promote pro-poor, gender-equal institutions and policies protecting and promoting food and nutrition security and resilience to climate change among women and girls.

CARE promotes [inclusive governance](#) by building the capacity of communities to engage with and hold decision-makers, including the private sector, governments, donors, and CARE, accountable. In global food systems, we especially recognize that the private sector has an enormous role to play in getting to justice. Our evidence-based global and national advocacy with all actors in food systems focuses on making sure women, youth, and the most vulnerable people have an equal seat at the table.

Increasing Resilience

Food and nutrition security is becoming increasingly unstable for individuals and communities in response to changing and unpredictable climate, conflict, and disasters. ***CARE believes that no intervention can create just and sustainable food systems by 2050 if we cannot build an adequate response to climate change. Additionally, we understand that the increasing frequency and intensity of shocks (climate and otherwise), pushes the poorest and most vulnerable into a cycle of moving from development to crisis.*** In

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In addition to our [Climate Change Strategy](#), CARE's Food and Nutrition Security Strategy seeks to increase resilience and break the cycle of continual crisis by focusing on how women and men can effectively plan for and manage shocks and stressors that threaten their well-being by analyzing and addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability, including gender inequality. CARE works to increase resilience in food and nutrition security by helping women, girls, men and boys build strong and equitable asset bases; increasing individuals' equal access to resources, including inputs, information (market, price, climate, for example), decision-making power, finance, natural resources, strengthening their adaptive capacity to climate impacts and ability to deal with occurring loss and damage, and supporting recovery mechanisms that are accessible to both women and men, such as household savings and formal safety nets.

Reaching CARE's 2020 Outcomes

In addition to increasing the food and nutrition security of 50 million people by 2020, Food and Nutrition Security contributes to the other CARE 2020 Outcomes

20 million people affected by humanitarian crises receive quality, life-saving humanitarian assistance: CARE's work in humanitarian situations highlights the importance of food security. The FNS strategy explicitly addresses humanitarian situations, and the continuum between humanitarian and development.

30 million women have greater access to and control over economic resources: FNS works on changing gender dynamics in access to and control over key agricultural resources and benefits; in control over key processes in agricultural value chains; and in farm, collective and



agribusiness management. It also works to create an enabling environment that recognizes and addresses the gender issues that cause food insecurity and vulnerability to climate change and other risks. Addressing gender issues that cross-cut food and nutrition security and economic development is core to the FNS outcome of sustainable economies.

100 million women and girls exercise their rights to sexual, reproductive and maternal rights and a life free from violence: Appropriate nutrition is critical to women and girls having safe and healthy pregnancies, and having healthy children. Gender equality approaches to FNS programming help support women’s confidence and ability to understand and advocate for their rights; this can reinforce work done within the Sexual Reproductive and Maternal Health programming.

Conclusion

CARE’s vision is of just and sustainable food systems that guarantee the right to food for all women and men, boys and girls. Through our work on programs and on influencing power holders in food systems, CARE believes it is possible to build food systems that respond to inequality, a changing climate, and a growing population. This vision builds on CARE International’s 2010 Food and Nutrition Security strategy, as well as the CARE 2020 Program Strategy. It brings together the best of CARE’s knowledge, expertise and programming to achieve our goal of saving lives, increasing food and nutrition security and resilience to climate change for 50 million poor and vulnerable people. The theory of change allows CARE to leverage our domains of change in nutrition, sustainable economies, sustainable agriculture systems, and

humanitarian action to fulfill CARE’s key roles in saving lives, promoting lasting change and multiplying impact. Together, we can reach our goal that CARE and our partners will support 150 million people from the most vulnerable and excluded communities to overcome poverty and social injustice.

Endnotes:

- i. CARE’s full SuPER Framework is available [here](#).
- ii. CARE follows the UN Food and Agriculture Organization’s (FAO) understanding that the term ‘smallholder farmers’ incorporates small-scale producers who engage in livestock (including pastoralists) or fish production or who engage in mixed livelihoods.
- iii. The Food and Nutrition Security Strategy endorsed by CARE International in 2010 is available [here](#).
- iv. <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofi/en/>
- v. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/nutrition/overview>
- vi. Inspired by the Institute for Development Studies’ preliminary vision for gender-just food and nutrition security : “Gender-just food and nutrition security means a world without hunger, where women, men, girls and boys have equal access to nutritious, healthy food, and access to the means to produce, sell and purchase food. It is a world where the right to food for all is realised. Importantly it is a world free of gender-based violence, where the roles, responsibilities, opportunities and choices available to women and men ... are not predetermined at birth but can, where possible, be developed in line with the individual capacities and aspirations. Finally, it is a world where countries are equipped to produce enough food for their own populations through environmentally sound processes, while also being able to participate in (gender-) equitable global and regional food trading systems.” Institute of Development Studies, 2014, Gender and Food Security – Towards gender-just food and nutrition security.
- vii. CARE defines governance as “...the exercise of power in the management of public affairs. CARE believes that if citizens are empowered, if power holders are effective, accountable, and responsive, and if spaces for negotiation are expanded, then sustainable and equitable development can be achieved.” We understand that governance incorporates power holders in households, communities, governments, and private-sector actors.

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