



ANNUAL REPORT: Achieving the Right to Food, Water, and Nutrition





FOREWORD

We live in the Ratonpur village of Raiganj Upazila of Kurigram district in Northeastern Bangladesh.

The Dudhkumar River is very close to our village. Each year, our village got flooded in the monsoon. These floods take a toll on our lives and livelihood. Cattle rearing is the primary source of income for my family and many others in our village. It becomes difficult during the flood season to feed our cattle due to price hikes for the cattle feed. During the recent northern-eastern flood in Bangladesh (May-June 2022), many poor households like us sold their cattle at a much lower price due to the scarcity of cattle feed. Using banana haylage as cattle feed has been a savior in such critical conditions. The banana tree is the most common vegetation for maximum of the families in our area. Everyone has a banana tree in their yard or garden. We use harvested banana stem and reduce the moisture level through several steps, after which it is ready for animal consumption.

Before my husband and I learned how to prepare banana haylage, we used to collect grass from the fields and purchased straws, husks, and other materials from the market to feed our cattle. Anyone can produce haylage using inexpensive recycled equipment and locally available raw materials such as a hand chopper, recycled bags, airtight containers, wheat bran, molasses, salt, and banana stem. As I recollect, we had to pay BDT 5,000 (USD \$52.48) to purchase traditional feed for cattle for six consecutive months, whereas the cost was reduced to BDT 3,000 (USD \$31.49) or even less in the same period when we started using banana haylage.

My husband and I initially received hand on training from SHOUHARDO III on banana haylage technology and were provided with the necessary instruments. The program also provided us digital training content (video) in haylage production. The program guided us for a year to see if this is a viable option. Now, banana haylage production has become a source of additional income for our family. Since starting this initiative, we have sold haylage worth BDT 20,000 (USD \$209.90), where we have received a profit of over BDT 7,000 (USD \$73.47) from an investment of BDT 12,000 (USD \$125.94).

However, using banana haylage as cattle feed is still a new idea for the community. It has been a struggle to attain the community's confidence that the feed will not harm their cattle; it is available for a lower cost and can be stored for a long time. Nonetheless, there has been a gradual change in attitude and an increased uptake of producing and using banana haylage by our communities. Five of our neighbors have already started using banana stems and other ingredients needed to produce haylage.

Despite all the hurdles, I strongly hope that more people in our community start using banana haylage as

alternative cattle feed especially considering our country's weather conditions. The easy process of producing haylage, the availability of the necessary ingredients at our yards and local markets, the long-term preservation capacity, and the minimal production cost give us hope of expanding our production so that we can use and sell haylage. Producing haylage from the banana stem is an eco-friendly intervention as it contributes enormously to transforming waste products into resources.

Mst. Rokeya Begum

Banana Haylage Producer
Kurigram, Bangladesh
SHOUHARDO III Household

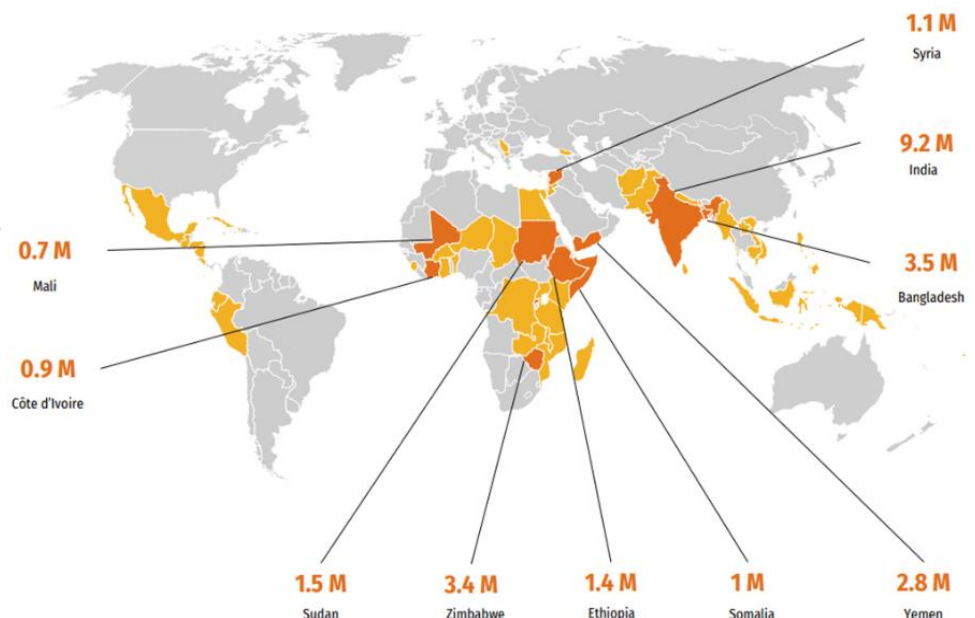
FOOD AND WATER SYSTEMS IMPACT

From 2015 to 2020, CARE has helped **48,989,602 people to increase their food security, nutrition, and resilience to climate change.** In that same time span, **1.3 million people were assisted in receiving access to water, sanitation, and hygiene.**

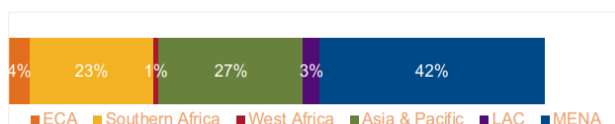
In 2021, CARE's Vision 2030 was launched. By 2030, CARE commits to support 75 million people, to majority women and girls, to fulfill their right to food, water, and nutrition. From Fiscal Year 2021, CARE has assisted **2,437,157 people increase their access to food, water, and nutrition.**

In Fiscal Year 2021, CARE had 795 projects in its portfolio on the Right to Food, Water and Nutrition, directly reaching 33.9 million people, 53% of which were women and girls.

Top 10 Countries by Direct Reach #s (in millions)



RFWN IMPACT BY REGION



REACH BY THEMATIC AREA





GENDER JUSTICE IN FWS

Food and Water Systems places [gender justice](#) at the heart of its programming; both as an end in itself and a means to multiplying impact across the eight change areas described in the [Impact Area Strategy document](#) of the Right to Food, Water and Nutrition impact area. In alignment with CARE's [Gender Equality Framework](#) (GEF), FWS supports program design, implementation and evaluation that builds on successful and innovative gender equitable approaches for building women's agency, changing power relations and transforming structures to ensure the fulfilment of the right to food, water and nutrition for all.

Our programmes use four main strategies to support women's empowerment and to achieve sustainable changes in gender relations:

- [supporting women's peer and solidarity groups](#)
- [engaging men and boys in social norm change](#)
- [building accountable and inclusive institutions](#)
- [facilitating women's leadership and collective action](#)

The Right to Food, Water, and Nutrition Impact Area Theory of Change is based on CARE's Gender Equality framework that is framed around three levels of change to build agency of women and girls in all their diversity and life stages, change relations between them and transform structures in order that they realize full potential in their public and private lives and can contribute equally to, and benefit equally from, social, political, and economic development. To ensure the fulfilment of the right to adequate and nutritious food and clean water for all, and ensure sustainable, productive, equitable and resilient food and water systems FWS programming focuses on:

Building Agency: Strengthen the capacities, skills, confidence of women and girls, particularly those that are food and water insecure, to challenge social norms individually and collectively, including gender-based violence and exercise choice and pursue their goals. This occurs through improved skills, knowledge, social capital, and confidence that enables women producers to proactively seek and participate in

In FY21, FWS programming either partially or fully engaged men and boys in **82%** of our programs.

In FY21, FWS programs were **54%** Gender Sensitive
17% Gender Responsive
15% Gender Equality

sustainable and more productive agriculture related activities and opportunities, and to obtain the support they need to improve their lives and fulfill their aspirations.

Changing Relations: Increase women's access to and control of productive resources, assets, markets, and services, and strengthen collective voice and promote equitable power relations in households.

Transforming Structures: Ensure inclusive and gender equitable policies, practices and norms & strengthen local systems for inclusive markets and sustainable service delivery.

FWS achieves this goal by building the agency and amplifying the voices of food and water insecure women and girls, including women small-scale producers, changing inequitable power relations, and supporting the transformation of structures that sustain inequality and discrimination. FWS deploys context- appropriate and tested approaches, models, and tools including the engagement of men and boys and collective community action.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Win-Win Project, CARE Burundi

The project tested how a gender equitable approach called the EKATA – Empowerment Through Knowledge and Transformative Action – improves not only women's empowerment, but also gender equality, food security, nutrition and economic well-being compared to “gender light” conventional mainstreaming approach. CARE's EKATA approach aimed at transforming power relations by fully engaging men in sharing caregiving responsibilities and enabling women to gain control over productive assets and to participate in household decisions. On the other hand, the “Gender Light” model is premised on the capacity of women to take individual actions, without addressing key consciousness-raising and collective action, considered crucial to transformation of social norms and unequal power relations.

A benefit-cost ratio for EKATA was calculated at 5:1 as opposed to 3:1 for the Gender Light model!

There was improved participation of women and men in community activities, and women had higher levels of satisfaction with their lives, were more confident speaking in public, and experienced less Gender-Based Violence (and when they did, they had more options for reporting outside of their families). EKATA group members reported shorter periods of food deficit during lean seasons, and women reported greater satisfaction with division of both domestic and agricultural tasks and with access to extension services and inputs. All the women in the EKATA groups considered themselves leaders and rated spousal support as significant. **The Gender Parity Index (GPI), improved by 51% in EKATA** and by less than 10% in the gender light and control groups.

I Integrating Gender Equitable Approaches into Project Cycles

FWS collaborated with **FAO** in producing a **Gender Equitable Approaches Step-by-step guide**. The Guide provides a conceptual framework on how to integrate GTAs in FAO's projects throughout the project cycle, lay out how a gender equality angle can be integrated at every phase of the project cycle and provide examples of concrete tools, methodologies that can help re-envision gender norms and achieve gender equality in programming. The objective of this guide is to assist FAO employees, and other development partners in integrating gender equitable approaches in project design and implementation so that these can achieve a transformational and sustainable positive impact on the lives of women and men, their families, and communities.



Livelihood Diversification: By Definition and In Practice

CARE promotes livelihood diversification as a tried-and-true strategy to ameliorate the economic status of small-scale farmers with a focus on rural women and youth as impact groups. CARE's food security and resilience programs take place in contexts of vulnerability where livelihood diversification becomes a high priority goal for the economic survival of rural households. Either out of necessity or opportunity, livelihood diversification is the process by which rural households participate to a diverse portfolio of economic activities and social support to secure a living income and pursue better standards of living.

In addition to growing and selling food crops, farming households often must resort to a short list of income generating activities to mitigate the risks that are inherent to seasonal and weather-dependent agri-food production. FWS programming is committed to ensuring the most marginalized rural groups, particularly female-headed households, can withstand, adapt, and recover from recurrent natural disasters and economic shocks.

FWS work on livelihoods diversification reaffirms the distinction on key terms related to mixed livelihood pathways.

- **On-farm livelihoods** consist of land-based work for crop production starting from soil preparation to harvesting.
- **Off-farm livelihoods** are economic activities and labor that have indirect link to agriculture inputs and outputs in both food and non-food value chains and operations such extension services, processing, distribution and commercialization, retailing all types of agri-food products and services
- **Non-farm livelihoods** refer to employment, income generating activities that are unrelated to agriculture as an economic sector such as construction, public works, tourism, manufacturing and others technical trades.

CARE promotes livelihood diversification and rural development ...That includes increasing women's access to and control of sustainable productive resources and assets. *Right to Food, Water, and Nutrition Strategy 2030*

49% of CARE's FWS programs work directly with Adolescent and Youth as impact group. *PIIRS Data 2021*

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Women and Youth in Agriculture

In Uganda, the She Feeds the World (SfTW) project worked with men and boys to improve nutrition and enhance food security. Role Model Men were trained on strategies for enhancing equitable food and nutrition security while leveraging the role of women in increasing food security and agribusiness at the household level. SfTW used Producer and Marketing Groups (PMGs) to increase access to markets, financial services, and timely market information. The PMGs were trained in collaborative actions like savings groups and collective marketing using CARE's Farmer Field and Business School model. SfTW in Peru prioritizes small-scale rural farming families, seeking to empower mainly women of reproductive age (15 to 49 years) and reduce anemia and stunted growth in children under 5 years of age.

In Thailand, a newly launched She Feeds the World project will support the next generation of small-scale farmers to prepare young rural youth and adults with adapted skills and improved agricultural practices to engage in profitable value chains. The interventions will reach a total of 187 youths in 80 communities for a total of 14,960 farmers at the end of the project.

Technical Skills and Entrepreneurship

In Niger, the program HAMZARI provided inclusive technical training opportunities for 1,168 people who received scholarships for adapted training and apprenticeship opportunities in a technical trade of their choice such as sewing, mechanics, welding, and beauty services. 56% of TVET participants were adolescent girls and young women 280 youth were training in business plan development using their trades and professional skills set. 60% of HAMZARI's TVET scholarships were allocated to adolescent girls and young women for both entry level and advanced skills training tracks. Through partnership with local vocational schools, the program ensured youth received proper training and secured the participation of established professionals to help youth develop and refine their technical skills to seek wages or self-employment.

Inclusive Value Chains

CARE Morocco is implementing the Economic and Social Empowerment of Disadvantaged Youth Project. The model of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) is adopted to provide youth access to credit to finance their income-generating activities. Project participants joined VSLAs and received training to create and enhance micro and small businesses. The training on life skills and technical trades helps adolescent girls and boys learn life skills and develop technical aptitudes to secure wages and self-employment. Funding and partnership with a major fragrance value chain operator will help guarantee the sustainability of the project and secure youth integration into the labor market. The project provides literacy and numeracy training.



“85.5% of surveyed young people across four districts in Zimbabwe had gaps in knowledge, skills, and attitudes that were acting as significant barriers to either securing employment or improving their livelihoods.”

Takunda Young People Survey (YPS), 2021



ACCESS TO INCLUSIVE MARKETS

FWS seeks to advance CARE's work on enabling women small scale producers to access inclusive markets by unlocking greater production and the expansion of profits and social and environmental returns. Agriculture and markets can play a transformational role in improving the livelihoods of women and their families. Addressing the barriers and supporting the empowerment of women to participate equitably in markets is at the heart of CARE's Agriculture and Market Systems work. Through a systems approach, we ensure the identification and address of underlying causes of inequity, ensuring that women access the resources, technologies, and opportunities to benefit from programming interventions. Therefore, the focus is not solely on farmers, but rather identifying key constraints and opportunities that increase the participation of women in agricultural value chains. Ensuring that we are adopting inclusive approaches, supporting, and working with different actors to influence and increase efficiencies and benefits for different actors across market systems will ensure that the benefits to women and their households are enhanced.

Small-scale food producers produce over 70% of the world's food needs.

KEY APPROACHES AND TOOLS

- *CARE's Market Systems Program Design Exercise:* To ensure work in the most gender equality market systems, identifying constraints and opportunities to unlock market systems performance.
- *Gendered Value-Chain Analysis:* To assess value chains taking into considerations the roles and opportunities available to women.
- *Utilize FFBS Marketing Tools:* To address access to productive assets and resources as well as increasing market linkages.
- *Conduct Market Research:* To understand one's own place in the market system.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Digital Goods Exchange Platforms & Online Markets

In Mali's USAID Sugu Yiriwa program, 1500 market actors have been supported to link into a digital platform to access market information and business opportunities. This program has continued to partner with other tech service providers including Orange Mali, a mobile telephone company, to increase farmers access to as well as understanding and use of digital platforms to increase market access and performance of producer organizations. Digital platforms became even more important with the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the board,

programs increased online capacity building which led to increased interest and digital capability of small holder producers to continue to use these technologies to enhance exchange with different actors. These continue to be important as farmers increase relationships to access both input and output markets.

Market Systems Approaches

These approaches influence buyer behavior and lead agricultural firms through business strengthening and expansion, and matchmaking. Our Cargill PROSPER 2 program delivered impact in increasing farmer access to markets through the adoption of market led programming. In Central America, through these market-led approaches, revenue from pork, tilapia, yellow corn, red beans, sorghum, and other microenterprise activities generated over \$2.1 million USD in gross income and over \$1.1 million USD in net income. This project continues to demonstrate that adoption of market systems approaches can increase farmer participation in markets, therefore increasing income.

USAID Sugu Yiriwa in Mali has also adopted market systems programming to increase market participation of small-scale producers. The program has used different approaches including business to business sessions, agricultural seed fairs, and support to producer organizations to participate in national and international fairs. Through these approaches, the program has over seen the exchange of agricultural inputs worth \$2 million USD and commodity sales of \$3.6 million USD over the last year.

Collective Marketing

In Cargills' PROSPER 2 program, there was an increased focus on collective marketing and building business strength of collectives including producer groups and cooperatives. Through this, farmers experienced an increase in income and revenue from agriculture. Ove 2,600 individuals organized into collectives to working with previously trained food and vegetable crop promoters and to establish collective plots on 48 hectares of land with a variety of crops including eggplant, squash, and cassava. To date, they've harvested 15.6 tons of produce, with approximately a third used for home consumption and the rest sold at market.

In Uganda's She Feeds the World PepsiCo funded program, SFtW established **50 Producer Marketing Groups (PMGs) with 4,931 farmers and 50 demonstration plots** with high-yield, drought-resistant crops that highlighted climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and good agricultural practices (GAPs). Through demo plots, producers learned practical skills that led to increased adoption of mulching (77% of participants), crop rotation (74%), soil erosion control (61%), using compost manure (84%) and improved seeds (74%), all of which improved crop quality and increased quantity. Also, at endline, 90% of women reported increased access to markets, compared with 30% at baseline. At endline, **90% of the PMGs reported having collectively bulked and marketed their produce** in the most recent harvest season. Through their marketing committees, the PMGs forged business relationships with reputable buyers, enabling farmers to get fairer prices than in the open market. In the last bulking season, 45 PMG member bulked 134 metric tons of beans and 468 metric tons of maize earning \$153,234. At the end of the program, SFtW's assessment of FFBS performance found 6% of PMGs had reached graduation level and 68% are on the level leading to graduation.



PREVENTING FOOD LOSS & WASTE

Food loss and waste occur across the food value chain, beginning at the production, post-harvest, and processing stages when food loss occurs, and continues into the marketing, distribution, consumer, and post-consumer stages when food waste takes place. Food loss and waste has a massive impact on people, planet, and resources.

Evidence shows that the world produces enough food to feed everyone on the planet, but more than one third, of food produced is lost or wasted each year, which is the equivalent to approximately one trillion US dollars' worth of food. Across the globe, small-scale farmers and hungry, undernourished people suffer the most. Current estimates state that as high as 30-40% of food crops are lost before reaching the market. The FAO states that if we could reverse this, it would result in "preserving enough food to feed 2 billion people," or twice the number of undernourished people across the globe.

Additionally, food loss and waste contribute to negative impacts to resources and climate change. The evidence is staggering: 28% of the world's arable land produces food that is then wasted, 38% of total energy consumption is utilized for foods that are lost or wasted, total volume of water for lost or wasted foods is estimated at 45 trillion gallons and is estimated at 3.3 billion tons of greenhouse gases emitted each year. Food loss and waste is a global problem that must be addressed, with greater urgency to address the current global food crisis and disasters that are a result of a warming climate. While some models stop at the consumption level, CARE has added the stage of post-consumption, which is an emerging focus area in Food Loss and Waste. In considering solutions to reducing food loss and waste and opportunities to positively impact people and communities, moving from a Linear Economy Model, as illustrated below, to a Circular Economy Model must be considered.

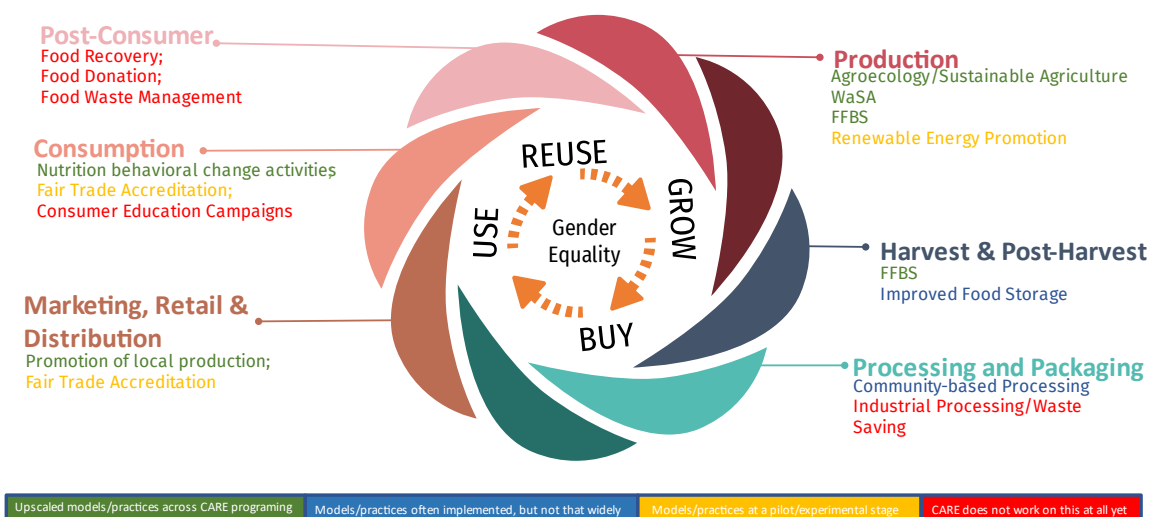


A linear economy model follows a "take, make, use, dispose," system, which generates a high amount of waste at each stage, and does not present a comprehensive approach to solving Food Loss and Waste.

To solve issues related to Food Loss and Waste, a holistic, systems approach requires a move from linear to circular approaches, as well as a strong focus on sustainable food systems and integrated approaches. The Food and Water Systems team designed a CARE-focused Circular Economy Model to reduce food loss and waste. In Circular Economy Models, "activities at all levels of the food value chain rebuild overall systems health by

designing out the concept of waste,” and “maintain raw material sources, reduce environmental impacts of production and consumption, help support economic activities, and products can circulate through systems and society.” Essentially, such a model can positively impact global challenges such as hunger, climate change, biodiversity, loss, waste, pollution, and can provide greater opportunities for innovation and livelihoods.

Taking a Systems Approach: A Circular Economy Model to Reducing Food Loss and Waste



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Nourishing the Future, CARE Honduras

When Hurricanes Eta and Iota made landfall in Honduras in 2020, Cargill’s [Nourishing the Future](#) program supported smallholder producers of tilapia and pig to improve their production and recoup food loss experienced from the hurricanes. By 2022, the program has reached over 1 million people in Central America. Nourishing the Future supports rural and micro-entrepreneurial livestock producers and their families – with a strong focus on women producers. During the hurricane recovery, from February to April 2021, these producers worked to rebuild 400 family gardens and 15 tilapia ponds that were damaged by the hurricanes and delivered vouchers to 220 micro-entrepreneur families and inputs to 225 producers as part of an emergency response effort in Honduras. Tilapia production in Honduras, with a per capita income of US\$3,299, was the most profitable production chain in the region despite losses suffered by heavy rains and landslides. Cooperatives and associations from this program have also combatted food loss by donating produce that is not sold to those without adequate access to or ability to purchase fresh produce.



IMPROVING NUTRITION THROUGH LOCAL STRUCTURES

Good nutrition is the foundation of children’s health and the development of society at large - it is also a child’s basic human right. CARE’s nutrition goal is to improve the availability of, access to, and consumption of nutritious foods among women, children, and their families and communities. CARE is committed to achieving food and nutrition security for the most vulnerable populations in the least developed countries. To do this, CARE leverages best practices, promotes evidence-based solutions, and explores promising nutrition innovations in how we treat and prevent nutrition. CARE’s Right to Food, Water, and Nutrition Impact Area Strategy ensures that **all our FWS programs include objectives for improved nutrition.**

CARE focuses our efforts on the **First 1,000 Days** from pregnancy to age two – this period in a child’s development offers a crucial *window of opportunity* to create brighter, healthier futures. The first 1,000 days are a time of tremendous potential and enormous vulnerability. How well or how poorly mothers and children are nourished and cared for during this time has a profound impact on a child’s ability to grow, learn and thrive. This is because the first 1,000 days are when a child’s brain begins to grow and develop and when the foundations for their lifelong health are built. With growing emphasis on reaching adolescent girls, and as new evidence emerges on best practices to remedy and prevent the *triple burden of malnutrition* (under and overnutrition, and micronutrient deficiencies), CARE’s Nutrition Unit adapts, incorporates, and advances its approaches and tools.

Key nutrition interventions address the direct causes of poor nutrition, such as: infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices; adolescent and maternal nutrition; micronutrient sufficiency, non-communicable disease treatment and prevention, and linking nutrition to health system strengthening interventions. CARE employs these approaches in communities that we work with, and through government buy-in. **Nutrition-sensitive interventions** support core nutrition specific and behavior-based approaches, ensuring not only the promotion of improved nutrition practices, but also the enabling environment for adopting them. CARE’s Farmer Field and Business School model is an example of how we bring sectors together for maximum impact.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Multisectoral Approaches

Good nutrition serves as a catalyst for advancements in health, education, employment, empowerment, and the productive capacity of women and men. The drivers of undernutrition are diverse, highlighting the need for multisectoral action and coordination. Single interventions cannot address malnutrition alone. Malnutrition must be addressed at a massive scale by bringing stakeholders together to work toward a shared mandate: to reduce malnutrition within our lifetimes.

CARE's Titukulane Program in Malawi uses CARE's VSLA model to bring mothers together to learn and discuss nutrition for them and their children. Additionally, Nutrition Cash Transfers provide nutrition support to pregnant women, lactating women and children under 2 years who fall within the most vulnerable household categories. The cash support has helped 15,835 pregnant and breastfeeding women and their young children to access healthy and diverse foods during this critical period.

Communities and Local Structures

CARE's Nutrition at the Center (N@C) and succeeding Collective Action for Nutrition (Ci4N) work to create and coordinate actors at the national, sub-national and communities to implement multi-sectoral nutrition policies and plans for collective impact. Our newest program, CASCADE, funded by the Netherlands government, promises to incorporate Ci4N to bring county plans and policies to the communities that need them most.

Addressing the Burden of Malnutrition in Humanitarian Contexts

The LOVE Project in the Philippines completed a successful 3-year pilot (2019-2021) to treat and prevent noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in humanitarian emergencies in Marawi City, Philippines. The goals of the pilot project are to: (1) test a women-led, community-based model for the effective prevention and management of NCDs in humanitarian settings; and (2) strengthen the local health system to successfully respond to NCDs. The LOVE Project, an acronym for "Limit Food Portion, Omit Sugary Drinks, Vegetables and Fruits Daily, and Exercise," was among the first of its kind to address NCDs in a humanitarian context. The tested model is ready to scale up to new countries.

Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)

SUN serves as a multisectoral convening platform to address and improve nutrition through food systems; health systems; education; water, sanitation, and hygiene infrastructure; and social safety nets. Involved since its inception, CARE's Nutrition Unit has engaged closely with SUN in every country we work with to promote an increase focus on nutrition advocacy at the local, national, regional, and global level.

CARE Ethiopia is a founding member of the country's SUN Civil Society Alliance (CSA) and through this alliance, they led the development of the Gender Equitable Nutrition Program Strategy and Training Manual Development in country.

CARE Laos is a member of the country's SUN CSA Management Committee which guides the strategic priorities of the alliance and are taking lead of the **Breast Milk Substitute Code Monitoring and Policy** input in country.

With funding from the SUN Movement, **CARE Peru** strengthened the capacities of youth leaders in subnational spaces that were formalized into a national network known as **ADN Juvenil Peru**. Today, ADN Juvenil is formally a non-profit organization and is a formal part of the Civil Society Alliance (PERUSAN).

CARE Sudan is the chair of the country's CSA steering committee and leads the CSA Network, which is one of the most active alliances in the global network. The CSA was instrumental in advocating to the government to pledge nutrition commitments during the Nutrition for Growth Summit.



ACCESS TO WASH SERVICES

The Right to Food, Water, and Nutrition Strategy under CARE's Vision 2030 approaches Water and WASH around three domains: WASH in Emergencies, WASH and Systems Strengthening, and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Ecosystems Protection. By articulating the linkages between these three areas of change, CARE is better prepared to address the interconnected roots of poverty and social injustice.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

There are many examples of impactful work in the Water, WASH + Climate space across CARE. In Latin America, **CARE Ecuador** ([ACCRES](#)) and **CARE Peru** ([Glaciares+](#) and [GOA](#)) build activities around understanding the landscapes, land and water uses, and users in an area, use adaptation and mitigation to protect and conserve water resources, link conservation financing mechanisms with productive activities through water funds, and use public policy and advocacy to institutionalize and finance successful models. In Sub-Saharan Africa, uptake of water, soil, and irrigation techniques and practices have improved infiltration, restored soil, and improved adaptive capacities of communities to manage dry season shocks and risks in **Malawi**, **Niger**, and **Mali**. The effectiveness of solar-powered water systems for multiple uses in **Zimbabwe** improve willingness of people to pay into revolving funds that maintain infrastructure operational. In **Ethiopia**, **Nepal**, and **Zambia**, CARE strengthens the capacity of government to develop, budget and execute landscape and watershed adaptation plans that restore ecosystems, protect water resources, and benefit livelihoods.

WATER IS LIFE!

The intersection of water, climate and ecosystems is a **social, political, cultural, and economic issue**. By centering women and girls, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, CARE can address the underlying causes of poverty and vulnerability to climate change.

We also cannot overcome poverty and climate vulnerability without ensuring the **quantity and quality of water for consumption and economic activities**. CARE must consider the role that water, and ecosystems play in creating vulnerabilities and affecting the ability of people and nature to adapt to climate change.

PARTNERSHIPS

Strengthening systems and building partnerships between sectors, with communities, and at different levels from local to international is a necessity when addressing the intersection of water resources management and climate change.

IWRM and climate adaptation are both similar and even complementary frameworks because they both require working at large scales socially, politically, and across shared watersheds. At the international level, CARE maintains numerous organizational partnerships such as the **CARE-WWF Alliance**, which is a platform for mutual learning, capacity building and joint programming and advocacy. Such partnerships allow CARE to have the technical expertise necessary to work at the nexus of conservation and development, which need to be integrated to address the multi-disciplinary causes and consequences of water and climate change. Building local partnerships is equally as necessary. CARE works with WASH committees, water user associations, disaster management committees, women's rights groups, agricultural collectives, and other community-based organizations that are on the frontlines of climate change and water scarcity.

KEY APPROACHES & TOOLS	
Pillars	CARE Examples
Integrating climate adaptation and ecosystems protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis Territorial mapping Community-based Adaptation Disaster Risk Reduction Water Use Surveys
Systems Strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equitable and sustainable WASH services Integrated Water Resources Management Community-based Water Resources Management Integrated land, water and WASH governance and planning Emergency preparedness
Agroecology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water-Smart Agriculture, particularly in dryland communities Community forestry management Collectives and savings group for sustainable livelihoods (e.g., Village Savings and Loans Associations, Cooperatives, Farmer Field Business School & Water User Associations and WASH Committees)
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate-resilient sanitation facilities Multiple use, irrigation and solar Water point / water resources mapping
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payments for ecosystem services Water funds Cash and markets-based programming with local WASH service providers
Social and gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social accountability tools (e.g., Community Score Card) Gender equality tools (e.g., Social Analysis and Action & Gender Marker) Gender analysis of water and WASH service needs

CARE WASH programs further the critical work of strengthening governance, building capacity of people and institutions, accountability, finance, and learning to ensure sustainable WASH services and water resources protection, reaching 5.2 million people in 2021.



RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY

Food and water systems face serious challenges and are characterized by multiple, concurrent drivers and risks. Human-driven climate change and increasingly severe and frequent weather events and natural disasters threaten the systems that we all depend on for food and water and contribute to rising conflict. To ensure the fulfilment of the right to adequate and nutritious food and clean water for all, CARE must ensure that food and water systems are sustainable, productive, equitable and resilient (SuPER).

Enhancing the resilience of agriculture and global food systems requires building the adaptive capacity of farmers to ensure that long-term stresses and discrete shocks do not lead to downturns in socio-economic progress. Characteristics of a resilient system include: a high level of diversity, connectivity between institutions and organizations at different scales, the blending of different forms of knowledge, redundancy within the system, equality and inclusiveness, and high social cohesion and capital. CARE's approach to increasing resilience can be summarized as follows: *If (i) the capacities and assets to deal with various shocks, stresses and uncertainty are built and supported and if (ii) drivers of risk are reduced and if (iii) these actions are supported by an enabling environment, then resilience is increased.* Change needs to take place and be sustained in **all three of these areas** to achieve outcomes for resilience.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

VSLA for Resilience and Sustainability

In the face of multiple restrictions due to COVID-19, the [Women Respond](#) initiative surveyed 1485 VSLA members and revealed that their groups have still found ways to keep their groups running, such as meeting digitally or only having VSLA leaders meet. As a result, 85% of VSLA members are still meeting. 60% of VSLA groups are continuing their group savings and around 63% are providing loans to members, despite the financial and livelihood challenges they are facing. VSLA members frequently volunteered their skills to provide information about COVID-19 and prevention measures within their communities. This includes sharing messaging, as well as developing businesses making masks and soap. Despite the pandemic, respondents said their VSLAs are still their greatest source of support, offering solidarity and mutual aid. On average, 66% of groups are using their social funds – ordinarily reserved for social events and activities - to support their members financially and with buying food and hygiene materials. Despite this, they are still struggling and need more support.

Community Score Card (CSC) for Sustained Action

In 2021, more than two years after the formal end of a health project in Malawi, a [study](#) revealed that many

groups have continued using the CSC to create change in their communities. The CSC has created a sense of ownership and responsibility among communities to address issues of concern. They feel empowered to identify problems and create solutions themselves that capitalize on their community resources and assets.

At the community level, traditional governments, youth groups, and Community Health Action Groups continue to use the CSC to collectively name problems, identify solutions, and enact and track changes with the support of civil society and government actors. During a focus group discussion related to a sustainability study, a youth from Chigodi shares, “...another thing I can talk about is that we are free, knowing each other, being free so that we can speak in public. At first it was difficult when we had not started scorecard for a person to stand in public in the village and speak as youth in our ages. We thought those who would speak in public were only the elders. But through scorecard we have benefitted as youths to speak if we have observed a problem at a particular time in the village or in a family or wherever we have observed, we are able to stand and speak.”

Although various groups have adapted the CSC process to meet their specific context (such as frequency of meetings, incentives for participation), the community groups continuing to use the CSC are all, utilizing the fundamental principles of the process. The district government continues to use the CSC to identify, prioritize, and plan for reproductive health services, while local health workers are using the CSC to improve delivery and utilization of services. Stakeholders from all perspectives appreciate the transparency and avenues for accountability that the CSC creates.

Good Practices for Sustainable Resilience Outcomes

Social capital. Ensure that community groups are self-selected by peers to build on shared interests, values, solidarity, trust, and ownership within local systems.

How this supports resilience and sustainability: The social capital within self-selected groups provides greater innate potential for resilience¹, while resolving most of the requirements imposed on the local system to achieve sustainability. The CARE [VSLA](#) model is the paramount example of how self-selected groups can translate social capital into resilience and sustainability both directly at group and community levels, and indirectly through group aggregation at inter-community and higher levels. This capacity to aggregate groups also provides a unique opportunity for VSLAs to expand their local systems and assimilate into new systems.

Enabling environment. Integrate tools and processes that evaluate and incentivize transparency, responsiveness, accountability, and self-replication in governance systems.

How this supports resilience and sustainability: Builds trust, social capital, and capacities for collective action and investment at all scales of local systems; improves the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of collective action especially for product and service delivery. CARE inclusive governance tools for building trust and accountability, e.g. [Community Score Card](#) and Social Accountability Audits are highly relevant to this practice, as are [examples of their application with WWF](#).



GLOBAL HUNGER CRISIS

*In 2021, close to **193 million** people were acutely food insecure and in need of urgent assistance across 53 countries/territories. This represents an increase of nearly 40 million people compared to the previous high reached in 2020.*

The negative food security outlook is projected to continue or worsen this year, and the global food systems impact of the crisis in Ukraine will only contribute to further decline.

The global hunger crisis is felt most by vulnerable and marginalized people with limited capacity to absorb additional shocks. This includes women and girls who, despite the key role they play in producing and preparing food, often eat last and least during times of acute food insecurity, are at higher risk of experiencing gender-based violence and various forms of exploitation and abuse and are frequently excluded from conversations about how to address food insecurity. Food insecurity and malnutrition also has a devastating impact on children, exposing them to immediate and life-long cognitive and developmental impacts, weakening their immune system, and leading to negative household coping strategies like child labor, withdrawal of children from school, and gender-based violence, including child marriage and other forms of violence against children.

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine and resulting disruption to food, fuel, and fertilizer markets has exacerbated an existing food crisis driven by conflict, climatic shocks, COVID-19, and economic pressures, particularly in contexts already experiencing humanitarian crises. In order to pull people back from the brink of starvation, create sustainable food systems, and prevent future food crises, we need comprehensive solutions that address the myriad drivers and impacts of food insecurity. The numbers of hungry people are rising, but funding is at an all-time low. We must continue to raise the alarm on the costs of inaction in preventing extreme hunger. **If we do not act immediately, millions of people could die from hunger.**

What is CARE calling on governments and the international community to do?

CARE is calling on the international community to:

- **Provide additive, flexible funding in urgent food assistance to reach more than 43 million girls, boys, women and men around the globe who are a step away from famine.** This assistance must begin immediately and reach as directly as possible the people most in need, now, so they can take action to feed themselves today and in the future. All countries should contribute their full and fair share, without diverting or reducing resources from meeting other pressing humanitarian needs.

- **Enhance efforts and work with all parties to end conflict and violence in all its forms.** Humanitarian assistance must be allowed to reach communities without barriers or impediments so we can urgently support those most in need. States have a duty to ensure that they and their security partners are respecting IHL and should take all steps to ensure their actions do not directly or incidentally exacerbate hunger.
- **Scale up anticipatory action through investments that strengthen the humanitarian funding system, allowing for more agile, immediate, and localized funding outside of the standard grant funding agreement.** There is a need to establish and improve shock-responsive social protection systems that can reach the most vulnerable in countries experiencing famine.
- **Follow through with commitments to localization in order to build resilience and address the root causes of hunger like conflict, climate change, and inequality.** Local and community-based organizations are often the best placed to access and support the humanitarian needs of populations experiencing acute food insecurity. However, the power inequities in the international humanitarian community mean they are disadvantaged when it comes to accessing the funds and leadership positions that are needed to affect change.
- **Women and women leaders in particular should be engaged as leaders in the fight against acute food insecurity.** Invest in alleviating poverty and hunger, in giving people the tools they need to build more resilient futures for themselves, sustainably adapt to climate change and guard against the shocks of COVID-19. This will help to prevent future conflict and displacement. This will prevent future hunger and famines.
- **Invest in energy efficient and climate resilient food production that is less dependent on chemical inputs and provides safe, decent, and equitable livelihoods for small-scale food producers and workers.** Ensure that humanitarian and development programs to address acute food insecurity are climate-smart and conflict sensitive. Eliminate child labour.
- **Ensure international trade systems are open, diversified, fair, and market oriented, while closely watching the commodities market for excessive speculation.** Ensure the response to the current food crisis but also the longer-term strategies to address food and nutrition security put Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls at the centre.

Additional Resources

- [Impact Data](#)
- [The Right to Food, Water, and Nutrition Strategy](#)
- Global Hunger Crisis
 - [Overview](#)
 - [Reports & Resources](#)

Acute hunger is increasing not only in scale but also severity: [Over 43 million people in 38 countries](#) across the globe are now at risk of falling into famine or famine-like conditions, unless they receive immediate life and livelihoods-saving assistance.



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Want to take a look at our global portfolio of projects? Check out our [FY21 Program Map](#) for more info!

For any additional information, visit: [care.org/our-work/food-and-nutrition](https://www.care.org/our-work/food-and-nutrition)