

# Gender Equitable MEAL

## Centering participants' voices and choices in our measurement

**CARE places gender at the center of all we do. This includes the monitoring, evaluating, accountability, and learning (MEAL) for our programs.**

We aim to center the voices and choices of communities and participants to determine what change, progress, and impact mean to them. Our approach to this – what we term *Gender Equitable MEAL* – is about shifting power to communities and participants to measure these changes and then use that data, learning, and knowledge to support their goals.

### WHAT is Gender Equitable MEAL?

Gender Equitable MEAL is an approach that builds on feminist values, theories, and approaches. It centers the voices of those we work with in all their diversity to help ensure our programming responds to their needs and perspectives.

Gender Equitable MEAL can be carried out in many different ways depending on the context, however it should always

- Generate evidence in support of efforts to address the root causes of gener inequality.
- Prioritize the rights, aspirations, and knowledge of those with whom CARE works and stands.
- Use methods that are participatory and empowering.
- Measure differences in outcomes for different groups, populations and identities.
- Facilitates the use of evidence generated to improve gender outcomes.

### HOW is Gender Equitable MEAL different?

#### Standard MEAL





- ⇒ Collects data through surveys **designed and used by CARE** staff, partners, and donors only.
- ⇒ **Driven by donors** and does not usually consider and reflect different stakeholders' interests.
- ⇒ Measures performance and success against **pre-determined** goals.
- ⇒ Analysis of data by an 'expert' independent from stakeholders.

#### Gender Equitable MEAL

- ⇒ **Creates space** for consciousness-raising, reflection, and capacity building.
- ⇒ Focuses on gender **power relations**.
- ⇒ Encourages evaluation processes that are **participatory** and empowering.
- ⇒ Promotes **innovative methodologies** which challenge reductive understandings of knowledge, and the methods by which it is obtained.
- ⇒ **Shifts the role** of the evaluator.
- ⇒ Contributes to **ownership** for stakeholders.

## GENDER EQUITABLE MEAL IN PRACTICE

CARE's programs have used a range of different approaches and tools to center gender in their MEAL. These include:

-  **Outcome mapping**  
Learn how CARE used the outcome mapping approach to drive programmatic learning in [Ethiopia](#) and in [Bangladesh and Nepal](#).
-  **Most Significant Change**  
See how this the Most Significant Change technique was integrated into this evaluation in [Uganda](#).
-  **Photovoice**  
Learn how CARE used the photovoice approach to assess project contributions to changes at community and individual levels while amplifying participants' voices in [Bangladesh and Nepal](#).
-  **Sensemaker®**  
Learn how CARE used the Sensemaker® approach to measure social norms change in [Bangladesh and Nepal](#).

Other potential approaches for centering participants voices and choices include [outcome harvesting](#), [appreciative inquiry](#), and community participatory analysis.

**CARE's Her Voice report centers the voices of women leading community response around the world to inform global discourse on the needs of crisis affected populations.**

## CARE's Gender Equitable MEAL Principles:



**Principle 1: Partners and community members of all genders are core stakeholders in MEAL and owners of the knowledge it generates.**

MEAL processes empower social justice partners/movements and women and girls in all their diversity, and historically marginalized groups – by centering their knowledge and choices and CARE's accountability to them.



**Principle 2: Prioritize understanding CARE and our partner's contribution to intended and unintended consequences of gender equality outcomes and objectives.**

MEAL activities enable CARE, partners, and the communities/stakeholders we work with to understand better how, when, and why gender affects development and humanitarian outcomes; how gender inequalities intersect with other inequalities; and our –and others –contribution to changes in gender and other unequal power structures; achievement of more equitable development and humanitarian outcomes; and, in the lives and well-being of women and girls in all their diversity.



**Principle 3: Prioritize methods that shift power to communities and that further understanding of why and how change happens.**

CARE employs participatory methods that center women and girls in all their diversity in our communities and qualitative analysis appropriate to measuring and understanding long-term and non-linear social, political, and economic change.



**Principle 4: Prioritize resourcing, budgeting, and capacitating of Gender Equitable MEAL.**

CARE seeks to resource Gender Equitable MEAL and works with donors, where applicable, to do this. Before embarking on Gender Equitable MEAL, CARE teams, initiatives, and programs assess whether there are appropriate resources, people, skills, and agreement from CARE management, partners, and our impact populations, designing approaches that can be responsibly implemented with resources available. Recognize that enabling gender equitable MEAL is everyone's responsibility.

### For more information contact

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