There is nothing better than sharing a satisfying, balanced meal with your family at the end of the day, but unfortunately, this is not the reality of life for many people living here in Southern Africa...

It isn’t simply about having enough to eat, it’s just as important to have a diverse diet that satisfies all of our nutritional needs.

A variety of foods that can provide people with good nutrition are available in local markets. But many people here cannot afford to eat well because they have to make tough decisions about how their scanty resources are used. Women have limited control or decision making power because of gender norms that reserve these roles for men. But women are, nevertheless, largely responsible for household food and nutrition. In this region women spend an average of six and a half hours per day caring for others, leaving them little time to do other things, including earning money. So women are largely dependent on the income of men, who typically do not prioritize nutrition, especially when things are tight. This situation forces people to rely on only the least expensive foods, which are usually also less nutritious. Poor people often resort to consuming staples like maize and rice. For many of their meals that may be all that they can afford to eat. In fertile and productive Southern Africa, poor nutrition persists because of poverty and inequality.

To lead healthy, active and productive lives people need a balanced diet. Public awareness campaigns in many countries have led to better eating habits and improving nutrition statistics. In our programming we work to increase people’s understanding of nutrition by sharing information about the importance of consuming the range of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that we obtain from different foods. But raising awareness is pointless if people are unable to afford a nutritious diet. HER HARVEST OUR FUTURE takes effective action to improve nutrition by following the SuPER approach. (Find this year’s review of the SuPER principles attached.) SuPER promotes agriculture that is nutrition-sensitive and resilient to fluctuations in the climate, enabling people to produce more crops to sell and more food for household consumption. Women have increased variety of food for meals and surpluses to take to market. By promoting savings groups, access to financial services and economic growth, we help people to manage and increase their resources and assets.

A Balanced Southern African Meal

Farida from Machame in Northern Tanzania cooked this balanced meal typically eaten by poor people in her district. She grew the maize, beans and spinach herself, but has to use money to buy onions, tomatoes, garlic, pepper, oil and salt, then buy fuel to cook her food. Farida takes pride in her cooking and likes to add coconut and other ingredients that make her food taste delicious. This meal costs Farida 3 USD to make enough for six people, and is the cheapest balanced meal that people can make in this district. But it, nevertheless, costs more than many people earn in a day. Other important food stuffs like meat, chicken, milk and fruit cost much more. For most people chicken is a holiday treat and meat is only available if they raise the animals themselves, which has high costs in feed and labor. It is not always possible to make this basic balanced meal in lean times of the year when crops and income run short. So when there is nothing left from the harvest and no money to spend, people resort to eating plain maize.
Women have more money to spend on food and are able to maintain good nutrition even in those times of the year when there are no crops to eat. But none of this makes a difference unless we can challenge norms, improve gender equality and actively promote women’s empowerment and men’s engagement. Existing gender roles perpetuate malnutrition by limiting what foods are bought, who eats what and how much. We work to ensure equal involvement of women and men in decision making about food and nutrition. When women have equal power to make decisions it leads directly to improved nutrition for all.

HER HARVEST OUR FUTURE is an ambitious, radical initiative that tackles the crisis of poverty by improving nutrition and food security across borders and partners in Southern Africa. Our goal is to stimulate lasting changes in 10 million people’s lives by 2020. So far we have achieved 3.6 million towards this target. In this, our second annual report, we will present our achievements across six impact areas. We will explain how we are achieving this change by supporting learning, improving quality and influencing donors and governments to ensure that women small scale farmers benefit from all our investments.

This year the focus of our annual report is nutrition. Across our region (Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) 10 million children under 5 are stunted, that’s two out of every five children (39%). Although malnutrition rates are gradually decreasing, this level remains shockingly high and unacceptable. Inadequate nutrition, especially during pregnancy, infancy and early childhood, stops children from growing and has an impact that lasts throughout their lives. Stunting does not just limit a person’s height, it limits all aspects of their development into robust, healthy and productive human beings. Hungry, malnourished children don’t do well in school and their overall prospects in life are limited, and this impacts the overall development of societies. But what causes these high malnutrition rates?

In Southern Africa only one child in ten aged 6-23 months (10%) has a minimum acceptable diet, and fewer than three in ten eat an adequate variety of food (28%).

Other significant factors that lead to poor nutrition are low levels of access to clean water (57%) and sanitation (28%) and low rates of breastfeeding (54%).

1. Data from the IFPRI 2017 Global Nutrition Report dataset.
Let us illustrate the point that malnutrition is an expression of inequality with some more statistics. In Southern Africa 31% of stunted children live in the poorest 20% of households.¹

Differences in stunting rates between regions or provinces within countries can be stark, particularly between affluent cities and under-developed, poverty stricken rural areas. Compare the stunting rate of 55% in rural Nampula province in Mozambique with 22% in the capital, Maputo. Nampula is a fertile and productive region, but the people who live there, nevertheless, have some of the highest rates of malnutrition in Mozambique due to poverty and inequality.² It is the comparative wealth of the city dwellers in Maputo that produces their improved nutrition statistics.

The World Health Assembly Global Nutrition Targets, which all countries have signed up to, include targets for 2025 for child stunting, wasting, low birth weight and breastfeeding. However, no country in our region is on course to meet the targets on stunting.³ Women are the most affected, for example, 37% of women of reproductive age suffer from anemia which results directly from poor nutrition.⁴

It does not have to be this way; every day we see that we can make progress. In Madagascar, CARE and partners have significantly reduced stunting amongst 37,000 children under 5 in two projects: AINA, from 52% to 43%, and RAN-AINA, from 58% to 37% and this has been achieved within the 3 year timeframe of these projects. This was achieved by training community volunteers to promote nutrition awareness, facilitating diversified agricultural production, establishing community savings groups and working with communities to increase awareness of gender and take action to change norms. This integrated approach has promoted dietary diversity and reduced stunting.

**OUR AIM IS THAT NO CHILD GOES TO BED HUNGRY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA OR LIVES A LIMITED LIFE DUE TO MALNUTRITION**

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¹ Figures taken from Brown, Ravallion & Van de Walle (2017): Are Poor Individuals Mainly Found in Poor Households? Evidence Using Nutrition Data for Africa
² Data from the IFPRI 2017 Global Nutrition Report dataset.
³ Data from the IFPRI 2017 Global Nutrition Report dataset.
⁴ Data from the IFPRI 2017 Global Nutrition Report dataset.
LEARNING TO TRANSFORM LIVES

In last year’s report we explained that we are investing in ‘Hubs’* to take action across borders. Hubs are sharing learning for improved program quality, demonstrating transformative results for advocacy and attracting increased resources. Our learning demonstrates that to catalyze long lasting transformations in people’s lives, we have to tackle poverty on several fronts at once. In this report we are arguing that to improve nutrition for long term results we need to diversify agriculture, encourage savings and promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. Here is what this means in practice:

To build better nutrition for poor rural communities, we promote Climate Resilient Agriculture (CRA), which ensures that farming techniques are SuPER**. This enables people to meet their needs for a diverse diet and withstand shocks, including the unpredictable weather in this region. By introducing drought resistant crops, intercropping and closely managing growing cycles to react to changes in rainfall patterns, farmers produce more. This supports women, who represent more than half of the agricultural workforce. Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) bring together nutrition project participants to increase their access to financial services. Saving helps people to ensure that they have enough money to buy food throughout the year. Making regular savings will even help poor people to start making investments that can, in time, produce a robust and diversified economic foundation for households. Increased income and stability leads directly to better nutrition.

CARE works with our staff, partners and communities to ensure that we are promoting positive changes in the gender roles and norms that act as barriers to good nutrition. Nutrition projects apply CARE’s Social Analysis and Action (SAA) to get people talking about their challenges. Many of these are related to the unequal power relations between women and men. An example of this is the prevalent and contradictory situation where women are responsible for household nutrition, but have no control over what food is bought. Women’s empowerment, increased decision-making and control over assets leads directly to better household nutrition. SuPER brings together our strategies to produce sustained, incremental changes in people’s lives that enable them to break free from cycles of poverty.

KEY LEARNING FROM OUR WORK THIS YEAR:

1. Promoting flexible models of nutrition-sensitive agriculture promotes dietary diversity and helps to address malnutrition

2. Community mobilization to tackle gender norms must start from the outset of all projects in order to achieve results

3. Savings groups provide the ideal platform for agricultural investment and economic growth for women

*These Hubs are: Climate Resilient Agriculture (CRA), Savings Lead Financial Inclusion (SaLFI), Nutrition and Gender Equality & Women’s Empowerment (GEWE)

**Sustainable, Productive and nutrition-sensitive, Equitable and Resilient Principles
1: FOOD SECURITY

In response to the drought in Zimbabwe, CARE and partners provided cash through mobile phone transfers* to over 400,000 people. 88% of the cash transfers were used to purchase food. There was a 69% drop in the number of families who had reduced food intake, and an 84% drop in households suffering from food insecurity, from 55% to 5%.

How cash in a drought helps you glow: The Zimbabwe cash transfer program was a critical source of household income for drought-affected families, particularly in the lean season. People experienced less hunger and told the evaluation team* that they ‘glowed’, as a result of consuming more food and having increased access to their preferred foods. Decision-making at the household level was reported to be a more collective approach, with men and women equally involved. Support in cash, rather than food aid, also supported local economies.

SCALE* in Zambia increased the proportion of households reporting eating three meals a day, from 13% to 51%, significantly higher than the 28% reported by a control group. VELONTEGNA* in Madagascar has helped over 65,000 households improve their food security levels, representing more than 75% of project participants.

2: NUTRITION

In Madagascar, AINA and RAN-AINA, showed remarkable impacts on nutrition. Stunting in children under five reduced from 55% to 40% in Amboasary Atsimo district, where CARE was implementing AINA. Significant reductions in malnutrition can be achieved in Madagascar, where 49% of children are stunted. AINA increased the proportion of children with Minimum Acceptable Diet from 11% to 70%. There was a 28% increase in food consumption, and women were 30% more likely to have acceptable diets than at the project baseline—and 70% more likely than in any other district where the program operated.

Healthy children need their families to have access to health services, clean water and sanitation. CARE’s nutrition work in Madagascar encourages men to be involved in their children’s health and nutrition.

Reduced levels of food insecurity for over

620,000

(a reduction of 35% points across 15 projects)

Nutrition programs improved food security for

45,500

(across 4 projects)

*Blue text signifies active links

7,800 children under 5 were helped to escape stunting

(an average annual reduction of 2.7% points)
The Enhancing Community Resilience Programme (ECRP)* in Malawi increased those households with knowledge of at least three interventions likely to enhance individual and community resilience to climate related disasters and variability, from 26% to 55%. The Food Security for El Nino Affected Communities project in Malawi helped households integrate key climate variables when planning their livelihood strategies. Households applying such community based adaptation approaches increased from 50% to 71%.

The COSACA consortium in Mozambique is composed of Save the Children, Concern, Oxfam and Care International, and funded by different donors such as UKAID, USAID, SIDA, ECHO, Flanders International. The consortium began its work in Mozambique in 2007, delivering emergency and large-scale humanitarian assistance to communities affected by floods. Between 2015 and 2017, COSACA provided life-saving interventions to people affected by the worst drought in 35 years. By January 2017, COSACA had reached over 220,000 people in the six provinces with food assistance. The organizations repaired water points, drilled new boreholes and trained members of water committees in managing and maintaining these infrastructures, in addition to promoting hygiene and sanitation practices, as well as providing nutritional counselling.

170,000 drought and cyclone-affected people in Mozambique benefited from food assistance, WASH, seeds and tools, and nutrition support. CARE and partners in 2016/2017 also supported over 175,000 people affected by drought and floods in Malawi, nearly 520,000 people affected by drought in Zimbabwe, and over 85,000 people affected by drought and cyclones in Madagascar.

*Blue text signifies active links
5: WOMENS’ EMPOWERMENT

Gender dialogues in Malawi reported an increase in women equally making household financial decisions from 34% to 47%. In Zimbabwe young women reported leading decisions and controlling assets, from 65% to 91%.

Much of CARE’s work starts with collectives, such as self-help groups such as VSLAs and Farmer Field and Business Schools. Recent analysis* of how different types of groups perform shows that the most successful groups are those that include a balance of both female and male members, but have women leaders. CARE project groups with a majority of women members increase their income increase on average 28% more per year than project groups with fewest women.

CARE-WWF Partnership Program, Nachingwea, Tanzania

6: GOVERNANCE

In Zimbabwe, the ECRAS climate resilience project worked closely with local government staff on the co-creation of a “hybrid forecasting” model. This model combines both technical scientific information from the Meteorological Office, and indigenous knowledge from local, traditional forecasters, producing a forecast which is more locally relevant and accepted in communities. Such close collaboration with local government staff has ensured this climate resilience tool is rolled-out not only in the 29 ECRAS project wards, but also in 20 other farming wards across the two districts (Chiredzi and Mwenezi). Beyond the communities where it works directly, ECRAS has contributed to increasing the resilience to climate change of 4,900 smallholder farmers in non-project wards – and is likely to contribute to increased resilience for a further 11,900 smallholder farmers in 2 districts where another NGO partner is starting to apply this approach.

CARE has pioneered Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) programming in Madagascar, developing tools and approaches that have been adapted and adopted by Government and NGOs. CARE has also influenced national policy for DRR, to shifting from a disaster response focus to one focused on risk reduction. Tools adopted by others include the national alert system for cyclones, and guides for community-level vulnerability assessment, simulation exercises, and disaster risk reduction planning.

CARE-WWF Partnership Program, Nachingwea, Tanzania

34,000 people held leadership roles in decision-making spaces, 58% women and girls. (81% women & girls, 15 projects)

Meaningful participation in formal and informal decision-making spaces was increased by over

50,000

additional women participated equally in household financial decision-making

an increase of 14 percentage points, from 41% to 55% (13 projects)

61,000

women and girls increased their access to informal financial services such as community savings and loan groups (VSLAs)

(34 projects). 92,000 women also increased their access to formal financial services, such as banks or micro-financial institutions

735,000

*Blue text signifies active links
INFLUENCING SOUTHERN AFRICA

The results we presented in the foregoing pages are from the work done by CARE and our partners, but HER HARVEST, OUR FUTURE is also achieving results at a much larger scale through our influencing and advocacy. The results that we achieve by convincing others to prioritize women small scale farmers in their efforts help us to achieve the target of 10 million. CARE works with partners who take our learning and apply it through their own organizations. National Governments are central to these efforts and our most significant results so far are where we have successfully convinced government agencies to adopt our strategies and approaches. We have, for example, developed policy positions that have been adopted verbatim by National Governments and used in international negotiations. We also work with other NGOs from the region, convene alliances and actively support established regional bodies and structures. Throughout our influencing work we promote gender equality and women’s empowerment.

WITH OUR PARTNERS, WE WILL TACKLE INEQUALITY AND REDUCE POVERTY AT A REGIONAL SCALE.

Here are some examples of our advocacy successes this year:

INFLUENCING CARE is providing support to Southern African Governments for engagement in regional and global processes based on national priorities.

CARE influences content of the UNFCCC Decision

HER HARVEST, OUR FUTURE influenced the outcome of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on agriculture to recognize the importance of socio-economic and food security dimensions of climate change in the agricultural sector. This provides us with a platform to promote strategies to support women small scale farmers under this global framework. The Government of Malawi adopted CARE’s position on agriculture for the UNFCCC negotiations. Find the paper here.

Africa Risk Capacity adopts a CARE recommendation

Africa Risk Capacity (ARC) and the Pan-Africa Parametric Climate Insurance Agency adopted our recommendations to make climate risk insurance respond to the specific needs of women small scale farmers. ARC reflected this in their lessons learned report which was influenced by CARE’s climate risk insurance report.

Three examples of our growing ability to influence Governments:

- CARE Madagascar influenced the national Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Policy. CARE’s tested approach to DRR from our projects has been fully adopted Government.
- In Malawi, CARE and Ms. Graca Machel lobbied government on the importance of the national nutrition policy. The policy was approved without amendments.
- CARE is working with the Government of Mozambique to increase spending on agriculture to 10%. CARE Mozambique’s work has been recognized in the local press.

*Blue text signifies active links*
UNITING PARTNERS FOR CHANGE

CONVENING
HER HARVEST, OUR FUTURE convenes NGOs to unite around joint positions for influencing.

CARE brought together Graca Machel Trust and FANRPAN to react to African Union member states performance on Agriculture. This alliance of NGOs released a joint response to Government investment in Agriculture for the past two years. The press release and joint position covered climate change, nutrition and agriculture and highlighted SuPER.

In Malawi, CARE convened NGOs to review the national seed policy to include the needs of women small scale farmers. The Government of Malawi has accepted CARE’s position and agreed to develop a Farmers Rights Policy that promotes the rights of women.

CARE chairs the Food and Nutrition security working of the Pan-African CAADP Non-State Actors Coalition (CNC). Through CNC, HER HARVEST, OUR FUTURE has championed SuPER to African Governments. In a recent communique from CNC to the African Union in response to the Malabo Biennial Report, SuPER is highlighted. Here is the communique.

Leadership for Nutrition

HER HARVEST, OUR FUTURE produced a report on how Governments can improve nutrition investment through national budget allocations to produce sustainable action and reduce stunting in the region. The report which covers nine countries has been well-received by Governments. Here is the report and here is the interview HER HARVEST, OUR FUTURE Advocacy and Partnerships Coordinator.

"Zimbabwe welcomes support from CARE on these matters and we look forward to continued engagement".
Government of Zimbabwe Representative, 2018

Judith, New Hope, Zambia
OPENING SPACES FOR CHANGE

The greatest challenge facing us all is to achieve Gender Equality & Women’s Empowerment (GEWE). We know that women’s empowerment changes societies, benefits all and reduces poverty. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the persistent and critical issue of nutrition. Food and nutrition have always been seen as primarily ‘women’s issues’: Women always work to improve nutrition whenever they can, but we must bring down the barriers that impose limits on their action. Male engagement is critical to achieving success in building better nutrition and achieving increased food security for all. Shared caregiving reduces the time burden on women and girls. When women and men make decisions together about what to grow and eat, how much produce to sell and how to invest any surplus income we see rapid improvements in dietary diversity. Positive changes in attitudes amongst men and women ensure more household income is invested in diverse nutritious food, leading to better nutrition for the whole family. The AINA and RAN-AINA projects in Madagascar used strategies for women’s empowerment and positive masculinity, to improve food security and reduce stunting.

None of this can happen without dialogue, changing attitudes requires opening honest and ‘safe’ spaces where people can talk freely about their ideas and feelings, disagree and learn to understand one another better. Our GEWE approach encourages our staff and communities to ask questions and listen to the responses. By listening to people’s opinions we can all become more open to challenging the attitudes held by ourselves and others. Through this new, open space women and men, staff, partners and project participants find greater equality and ability to express their ideas and feelings. Honesty provides fertile ground to grow change.

If we are honest we recognize that there is not always a picture of success, some things do not work. So we have developed a new and innovative approach: ‘Failing With Honesty’ that we are encouraging throughout our work. This initiative was born out of the need to learn from what does not work in order to improve the quality of our programming and increase our ability to stimulate and catalyze real and lasting change. Getting people to talk openly about what did not work relies upon our ability to create safe spaces for people to express their experiences freely and share with others without prejudice. Talking about failures unlocks our ability to increase success.

POST-HARVEST LOSS

In the coming year we will be focusing attention on how to reduce Post-Harvest Loss. It is unavoidable that some crops are lost to pests and unpredictable weather in the field, but you might be surprised to know that an additional 40% is lost after harvest. We can reduce losses through better harvesting and storage techniques, improved transport and access to markets. This helps to maximize farmer’s yields and ensures that people have more food and more money. Reducing Post-Harvest Loss will help us to beat Malnutrition and Food insecurity. We can all do something to reduce Post-Harvest Loss: Individuals, communities, farmers, Southern African women and men, NGOs, donors, National Governments & Regional Organizations. We will tell you more about how you can get involved in next year’s report.

HER HARVEST OUR FUTURE • TESTED STRATEGIES TO CHANGE LIVES • NETWORKS WHERE WE INFLUENCE OTHERS
WE NEED RESOURCES TO INCREASE OUR IMPACT AND DEFEAT POVERTY
GEORGINA: BUILDING BETTER NUTRITION

38-year-old Georgina Phiri of Songwe village, Katete District in Zambia’s Eastern Province, her husband Moses and their children, are among nearly 800 households in CARE’s Food and Nutrition Security & Enhanced Resilience (FANSER) project. The project increases the availability and consumption of nutrient-rich and diverse foods to reduce stunting, which affects 40 percent of children under 5 in Zambia. Georgina explains,

“Previously, we only ate rape and pumpkin leaves, but after being supported by CARE through training and the provision of seeds and equipment, we are now growing and eating a great variety of vegetables including beetroot, spinach, onions, sweet potatoes, carrots and tomatoes.”

Lack of knowledge about the importance of dietary diversity is a primary cause of malnutrition in Zambia. This is ironic and unnecessary in a country that has a huge potential for diversified agriculture. Increased production alone is insufficient to reduce malnutrition if people continue to grow and eat a limited variety of foods. Addressing knowledge gaps about the nutritional content of food, preparation and consumption are essential steps in combating malnutrition. Georgina and Moses were trained on vegetable production and now grow, preserve, process, prepare and consume all different types of food. The couple were also trained on water, sanitation and hygiene practices, which facilitate climate resilient agriculture and promote improved nutrition. Georgina previously had no way of irrigating her garden, and so she could not grow vegetables throughout the year, but the project has also helped to address that need. She told us that,

“Using a bucket to draw water from a deep well is tough. But, using the treadle pump provided by the project, we have increased our farm plot from 150m² to 250m², and now we even have surplus vegetables to sell,”

Georgina has reduced the time and effort that she previously spent watering the garden and this has given her freedom to engage in other activities. Some of these include caring for her family, growing and selling vegetables. With increased income Georgina says that she has been able to provide good nutrition for her household. Although the project’s primary targets are women, the role of men in nutrition is also important. Moses reflected on the personal impact the project has had on him,

“I thought feeding children was a woman’s job, but my attitude to this has changed. I realize that the problem of malnutrition needs active participation from both men and women.”

This is not the end of the story, they are taking the first steps in challenging ways of life that they had previously accepted. Meaningful change in the inequality between women and men will take time. The success of our projects rests on our ability to stimulate conversations that set in motion an empowering process of change. There is still a lot more work to be done. So while we celebrate the positive changes in their lives, we look forward to seeing these first steps bring about permanent changes in societies. Georgina’s story shows that tackling malnutrition needs an integrated approach, from crop production, new technologies and nutrition education to challenging gender roles and norms. Through our efforts to tackle the crisis of malnutrition in Southern Africa, CARE and partners are BUILDING BETTER NUTRITION and changing lives FOR GOOD.

CARE and partners have contributed to improved food and nutrition security, and resilience to climate change, for over 3.6 MILLION PEOPLE (3,632,793) in Southern Africa

Unite with CARE to achieve our target of 10 MILLION BY 2020

Contact us through:
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