



**Focus on Food: Successes from CARE's Food and Nutrition Security Portfolio**

**April 2015**





## The Problem

Today's food systems are broken. Globally, over 805 million people are chronically hungry and over 160 million children are stunted. At the same time that we must feed and nourish these 800 million, we face increasing impacts of climate change, natural resource scarcity, and a growing global population. **Put simply, feeding and nourishing today's hungry and malnourished and the growing population of tomorrow – without destroying the planet and in the context of climate change – is perhaps the greatest challenge we face.**

Two-thirds of ecosystems are already used unsustainably; one-fifth of cropland is degraded and unsuitable for farming; and agriculture is both one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gasses, and already showing reduced yields as a result of a changing climate and unpredictable weather patterns. For women the challenges are even greater: they are often the last to eat when food is scarce; carry a heavy labor burden that is largely natural resource dependent; and do not have

equal access with men to productive inputs. Simply put, business as usual will not create sustainable and equitable food and nutrition security for the planet, much less for the poorest and most vulnerable people. **Business as usual is not a just and sustainable food system.**

## The Solution

The good news is that we know change is possible. CARE's roots are in tackling hunger by delivering CARE packages. In our 70 years, we have evolved our approach to deliver lasting change – not just food.

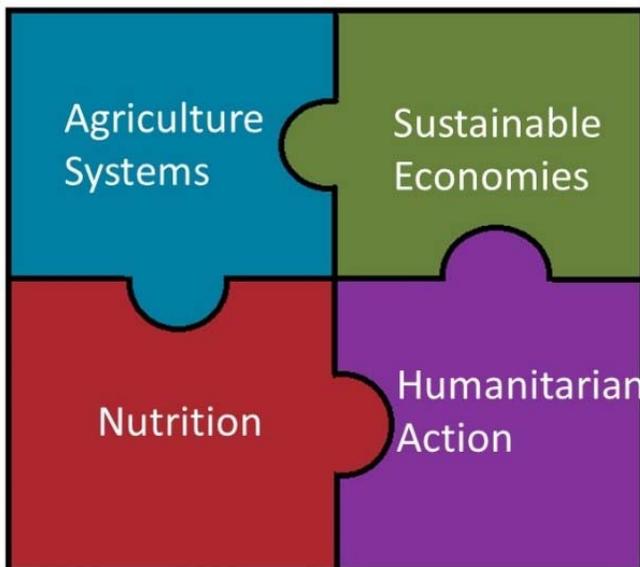
CARE's food and nutrition security work spans from responding to emergencies to enabling small scale farmers, fishers, and pastoralists to sustainably increase productivity, access markets, build resilience to climate change, and ensure the nutrition of their families. We emphasize the role that smallscale food producers play in ensuring the food and nutrition security of all – and particularly emphasize the role and rights of women as food producers and consumers.

## CARE's Focus on Food

To achieve our goal of having 50 million poor and vulnerable people improve their food and nutrition security and their resilience to climate change, CARE works to strengthen gender equality and women's voice, promotes inclusive governance, and works to create resilience. In FY14, CARE worked with over 13 million participants and had over 240 projects that focused on food and nutrition security.

Our food and nutrition security work focuses on four specific areas.

- **Nutrition** CARE focuses on reducing the impact of malnutrition in women, infants and children recognizing food security, livelihoods, health, care practices and gender equality as key factors to ensure a positive nutritional status.
- **Sustainable Economies** To ensure that 30 million women have greater access to and control over economic resources, CARE aims to support creating employment and increase the income of its impact population and contribute to their food and nutrition security.
- **Agriculture Systems** CARE promotes sustainable, climate-sensitive smallholder agriculture systems to improve food and nutrition security for producers and consumers—male and female, urban and rural.



### SuPER Work: Our Key Principles

In order to arrive at just and sustainable food systems, CARE focuses on a few key principles for interventions. We know we're heading in the right direction when our work is SuPER:

- **Sustainable** systems are grounded in healthy ecosystems, stable, accountable and enduring institutions and sustainable financing that protects people and the environment;
- **Productive** (including profitable and nutrition-sensitive) systems and intensification increases returns on investment, including of labor, by farmers and is climate 'smart';
- **Equitable** outcomes come from our work on enabling equal rights, opportunities, resources and rewards for smallholder farmers, taking into account women's needs and constraints, and supporting access to affordable nutritious food by rural and urban consumers;
- **Resilient** individuals, families, communities and systems are able to withstand shocks and stresses, including climate impacts and other risks.

We strive for 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** CARE commits to ensure timely and effective emergency food security interventions that can save lives, reduce suffering, protect assets/livelihoods, and enhance resilience, while contributing to the empowerment of 20 million women and long-term poverty and vulnerability reduction.



## Nutrition

To truly achieve food and nutrition security for all, CARE knows we must tackle the vicious cycle of malnutrition. When children are malnourished, it has permanent negative impacts on physical and well as cognitive development, meaning lower growth, learning, and earning potential. CARE prioritizes the integration of nutrition into our programs: from promoting exclusive breast feeding to identifying crop varieties with higher nutrient value. And in one program – SHOUHARDO in Bangladesh – we demonstrated that the most effective way of reducing child stunting is empowering women.

### Nutrition at the Center (N@C) pilots new ways to reach women in Benin

CARE Benin is field testing using Village Savings and Loan (microfinance) platforms as a way to conduct nutrition programming with support from Benin's limited public health system. The team has developed a curriculum for how the nutrition and water and sanitation messages can integrate into a traditional financial education work. The model uses champion women in the microfinance group who get support from their local health centers to spread health and hygiene messages. Benin is starting the second wave of testing sites, with the eventual plan to test in 224 groups.

Piloting "Household Challenge Books," where interested households have a notebook that helps them track their own behavior changes and obstacles that they are facing so that the program can support them (targeted for 720 households)

### Children in the Pathways program in Mali are growing taller

The CARE Pathways program has piloted a Farmer's Field and Business School that prioritizes putting local farmers, especially women, at the center of all of learning and improving agricultural techniques. One of the innovations is to integrate nutrition messages into a more standard agriculture-focused program.

When you ask what they learned about nutrition, people in Dona tell you about Shaka. Shaka's mother died when he was born. As far as the village was concerned, Shaka was going to die, too. With infant mortality at 12.8%, and no mother to nurse or care for him, people assumed that Shaka wasn't going to make it. Dona had just worked with CARE and AMAPROS—our local partner—to plant moringa trees as part of a conservation agriculture project. So Shaka's caretaker made porridge with moringa leaves to feed Shaka, using what she had learned about nutrition, and complimentary feeding—a practice many women were starting to adopt with the project, and Shaka lived. Now women will tell you that the babies they used exclusive breastfeeding and complimentary feeding with are bigger, smarter, and healthier than the ones who didn't get it.

### Nutrition at the Center (N@C) forges new connections in Bangladesh

CARE Bangladesh found a new use for their baseline data on nutrition. Besides using the data to plan their own programs, they are taking it to the government to change national strategies and create a program that will last. They have worked to include nutrition as part of the regular curriculum for Community Support Groups

**Assitan Coulibaly sees that her children are literally bigger than they would have been before Pathways. “I started exclusive breastfeeding with one child, even though the village didn’t really believe in it. That child grew bigger and healthier than any of my other children.”**

that manage health posts, and for agricultural extension agents so that crops they support improve nutrition.

They also have regular meetings with agriculture, health, and development staff in Bangladesh to bring those groups together and demonstrate new ways that CARE is learning to reduce stunting and anemia.

#### **Investing in Gender Equity gets results**

In CARE’s SHOUHARDO program in Bangladesh, economists and nutrition experts from around the world were shocked at the numbers coming out of Bangladesh.

They had never seen anything like the results of a program designed to fight malnutrition and improve the lives of more than two million of the country’s poorest people. Stunting, a measure of the shortfall in a child’s growth due to malnutrition, had plummeted 28 percent from February 2006 to November 2009, even as Bangladesh suffered a crop-crushing cyclone and food-price spikes caused by global grain shortages. The annual stunting decrease was nearly double the average for U.S. government food security projects of this kind. The single most effective intervention? **Women’s empowerment.**





## Building Sustainable Economies

We recognize that addressing food and nutrition security isn't just about getting food to people; it's about building their livelihoods. In FY 14, CARE worked directly with more than 4 million people focusing on economic empowerment, through 630 programs world wide. We focus especially on women's economic empowerment, since we know that women have extra barriers to market and credit access, and that equality for women can have huge benefits for women, families, and economies.

### CARE Bangladesh Makes Markets Inclusive

Throughout northwest Bangladesh, where incomes average \$1 per day, CARE helps strengthen markets that govern how small dairy farmers earn a living, a new book on the inner workings of "value chains" concludes. Small Bangladeshi dairy farmers typically own one to three cows, yet produce 90 percent of the country's milk supply.

Co-authors Kevin McKague of Cape Breton University in Canada and Muhammad Siddiquee of CARE Bangladesh published "Making Markets More Inclusive: Lessons from CARE and the Future of Sustainability in Agricultural

Value Chain Development" offers in-depth insight into how non-profit and profit organizations can connect poor producers in developing economies with the right markets to deliver deeper social and economic impact – as CARE has done with some 50,000 dairy farmers in northwest Bangladesh.

"Making Markets More Inclusive" explores CARE's efforts to support participant farmers – most of them women – by strengthening the entire chain those farmers access in order to get their milk to market. From animal healthcare interventions such as necessary vaccinations that improve health and milk productivity to milk collection points that yield a fair milk price, a stronger value chain means more income for farmers. The program's successes are clear:

- Participant farmers have increased their cows' milk production by 48 percent.
- Milk consumption in farmers' household has increased 46 percent.
- Daily income from milk sales has increased 97 percent.

## GRAD in Ethiopia Graduates People Out of Poverty

GRAD is a five-year USAID-funded project that targets 65,000 households of the more than 8 million chronically food insecure households in Ethiopia. Led by CARE and implemented through a partnership of local and international organizations, the project activities are designed to increase households' participation in diverse economic activities, individually and in groups, while also strengthening and facilitating linkages between GRAD participants and input suppliers, service providers, and local/regional markets. The program also includes activities aimed to build the resilience of households and communities by building income and assets. GRAD engages men and women to promote gender equality and create more equitable outcomes. Identifying, documenting, and promoting the most successful interventions helps families graduate out of social assistance programs, and creates long term food security for communities in Ethiopia.

GRAD aims to increase annual household incomes by \$365 per family using CARE's push-pull model. The push-pull model builds activities that can support families to earn more income—like improving their access to better seeds, and those that can pull people into more formal and stable markets—like increasing companies' ability to negotiate contracts with smallholder farmers, rather than focusing only on big farms.

### GRAD participants Asefa and his wife

**Almaze can access loans at low interest rates in order to invest in their farm**

**through their Village Economic and Social Association. Asefa raises sheep and goats, which he sells in the market. He**

**has already paid off his loan and invested his profits in additional livestock.**



## India Partners With The Private Sector for Affordable Insurance

In India, CARE has worked with Allianz to offer insurance costing under 8p (\$0.13) a month, to protect small-scale producers from the effects of natural catastrophes or accidents. These micro-insurance policies, co-designed by the communities themselves, are affordable even for those who earn less than £1.50 (\$2.50) a day.

## Living Blue Creates Jobs and Benefits in Bangladesh

Living Blue, a social enterprise jointly owned by workers and artisans, has created employment for marginalized poor in the forms of 199 quilters, 2,700 indigo farmers and artisans employed in dyeing, and printing through block and shibori techniques.

The opportunity for these people means supplemental community-driven employment as opposed to struggling to find seasonal off farm work during lean periods and often migrating in search of work. This income enables poor families to send their children to school and to eat two to three meals a day instead of just one, as many had done before CARE's initial intervention and before the company formed.

The project also created US\$ 3.3 million worth of social benefits including supplemental income for farmers, artisans' skills, infrastructural development and employment generation.

**“This is the first time my husband has given me land to farm my own crops. ...  
So I thank you people for changing the minds of our husbands.”**

**- Female Farmer in Ghana**

## **Improving Agricultural Systems**

Smallscale food producers often lack access to the inputs and resources they need to have productive, sustainable, resilient livelihoods – whether it’s secure land tenure or vibrant natural resources, information about weather and market conditions, access to financial services, training on sustainable agricultural techniques, or improved inputs like seeds.

For women, these challenges are even greater. Women are often the last to eat when food is scarce, they have a heavy labor burden (fetching water, fuel, food; caring for children and elderly; and providing substantial agricultural labor). Yet they don’t have equal access to resources as men: if they did, research shows, as many of 150 million fewer people would be hungry.

CARE’s programs emphasize that women need access to these inputs; that they must be able to exercise equal decision-making power with men in their households and communities; that labor burdens must be more equally shared.

## **Pathways Improves Yields, Incomes, and Access to Land**

With the generous support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, CARE’s Pathways Program is based on the conviction that women farmers possess enormous potential to contribute to long-term food security for their families and substantially impact nutritional outcomes in sustainable ways.





Pathways works in six countries (Bangladesh, India, Malawi, Tanzania, Ghana, and Mali) to increase food and nutrition security for 50,000 women farmers, their families, and their communities.

As of January, 2015, Pathways has directly worked with 49,000 women farmers through more than 5,500 Village Savings and Loan Associations. Using improved agricultural methods, Farmers' Field and Business Schools, new marketing techniques, and lessons on nutrition and gender equality, Pathways has:

- Advocated for women to get access to 9,296 acres of land for production (that's half the size of Manhattan)
- Increased yields up to 200% on fields and crops
- Generated nearly \$4 million in revenue for female farmers and businesses
- Gotten 65-75% of women farmers to adopt improved agricultural techniques

Perhaps most importantly, Pathways has promoted more equal relationships and decision-making at home. In all of the project areas, women and men are telling us stories of how they now work together to increase

income and food and nutrition security.

### Farmers' Field Schools in Mozambique Increase Yield by 400%

In Northern Mozambique, CARE programs, and our programs with the CARE WWF Alliance, focus on giving farmers the tools and experiences to make informed decisions about what crops and techniques will best suit their needs. Rather than an expert-led extension approach that tells farmers what to do, these schools focus on putting local farmers in the lead so they have the information (including climate information) and skills to experiment and find locally appropriate solutions. The programs focus on a combination of improved yields, planting techniques that increase yield, and introducing new species that renew the soil and provide nutritious food for families.

Preliminary data from the work in Mozambique suggest that using conservation agriculture, improved varieties, and other simple practices like increasing plant populations – core principles of CARE's SuPER Agriculture approach – have increased yields of cassava by more than 400% in just 3 seasons.

**Anastacia Antonio heard about the Farmer's Field School program and made sure it came to her village. "It's not easy for a woman alone to have a farm and get people to listen to her. But I wanted a school here so we could improve our practices."**



## Humanitarian Action

Besides using development programs to build resilient communities that can withstand shocks, in emergency situations CARE focuses on providing immediate support that can contribute to long-term sustainability. Our activities are based on robust assessments of the situation and gender sensitive approaches that support gender equality and women's empowerment and contribute to broader global learning.

### Food Assistance that Builds Haiti's Ability to Withstand and Respond to Emergencies

The Kore Lavi program directly supports the Government of Haiti's social protection efforts through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MAST). Kore Lavi is implementing a safety net program that improves access to locally produced foods among vulnerable households. The program also focuses on maternal and child health and nutrition interventions for pregnant and lactating women and children under two years of age. The program is implemented in 23 communes of the 5 departments of Haiti. Beneficiaries get access to fresh fruits and vegetables, are able to participate in a formal market, and exercise their sense of dignity by being able to make their own food choices. In turn, local farmers are able to receive a fair price for their products, participate in a stronger market, and meet the needs of their community. This innovative approach also is setting the ground for a sustainable program that can be country-led and country-run in the future, in order to provide local systems that address the long-standing issues of chronic food insecurity.

Since it began, Kore Lavi has:

- Provided social assistance to 109,790 people;

- Worked with the Haitian Government to build a system for identifying vulnerable families for assistance that can scale up in emergencies;
- Created an accountability mechanism where people can bring their complaints and get answers about how to get help;
- Supported 9,720 families to build their asset base and risk management strategies.
- Used paper and electronic vouchers to help 18,000 households gain access to fresh and staple foods;
- Provided food to 173,000 children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers.

## Multiplying Impact: Research and Advocacy

Research deepens CARE's understanding of social, environmental, political and economic dynamics that shape vulnerability and poverty and their underlying causes, and enables CARE to pilot innovative solutions and demonstrate successful approaches that meet the needs of poor and vulnerable populations. The results both enhance CARE programs and position CARE leaders to influence policy-makers and practitioners.

### CARE-Cornell Collaboration

Together, Cornell University and CARE work to understand and address one of the world's most intractable problems: developing sustainable and just local food systems for the millions of people who live in rural poverty and face food and nutrition insecurity. We work to identify critical points where interventions will do the most good, and we develop evidence-based solutions that can be applied at scale to achieve transformational impact.

**CARE provides evidence of what works and advocates for policies that support smallscale food producers, promote food and nutrition security for women and families, and build their resilience to climate change impacts.**

The CARE-Cornell Collaboration's signature initiative is the Impact through Innovation Fund. The IIF provides an opportunity for CARE development professionals and Cornell researchers to work together to design, implement and/or evaluate new technologies and practices that will improve the well-being and resilience of poor rural individuals, households, and communities.

### **Policy and Advocacy Agenda**

Poverty is not an accident but a social justice issue. This demands that CARE amplify efforts to promote the realization of human rights and to address the underlying causes of poverty. The underlying causes are often related to a lack or poor implementation of national and international policies to protect and promote the interests of poor and marginalized

communities. Advocacy – from direct lobbying to grassroots mobilization to awareness raising through social media – is a powerful, complementary tool to other CARE strategies.

CARE uses our expertise, credibility and partnerships to advance policies that meet the needs and promote the rights of chronically hungry people, smallscale food producers, women and their families. CARE's advocacy has targeted global policy processes, such as the UN Committee on World Food Security and the post-2015 development goals, as well as national processes such as US development policy. CARE's advocacy efforts have been instrumental in advancing better global and national policy, from reforms to US food aid to pledges from Peruvian presidential candidates to reduce child malnutrition rates.





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**Founded in 1945 with the creation of the CARE Package®, CARE is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty. CARE places special focus on working alongside poor girls and women because, equipped with the proper resources, they have the power to lift whole families and entire communities out of poverty. Last year CARE worked in 90 countries and reached more than 72 million people around the world. To learn more, visit [www.care.org](http://www.care.org).**