



CARE Ethiopia

A Decade of Program Learning Series Resilience

Recurrent shocks (droughts, floods, conflict and global food price inflation) are heightening underlying vulnerabilities and eroding the resilience of the Ethiopian population. Women contribute about 70 percent of the food production in Ethiopia, despite limited ownership of resources; access to extension services; and access to land, credit and other productive resources. Regardless of the important role women play in the sector, their contributions go largely unrecognized (considered informal and secondary to men's) and they suffer disproportionately from the consequences of nutritional deficiencies and increased workloads.

CARE Ethiopia knows that investing in women and providing them with equitable access to information, opportunities, resources and services and by engaging men and community and religious leaders to challenge negative social norms, will increase agency and reduce the social, cultural and institutional barriers to women's economic empowerment and thereby resilience.

How we have been working on resilience

CARE Ethiopia's approach to resilience work focuses on helping communities and government institutions work together to address food insecurity while building household resilience to shocks, while ensuring that women and girls have equal access to and control over quality services and economic gains and can exercise their rights. This requires particular attention to the social norms and barriers affecting women and girls, and

recognizing their valuable role in both shaping and sustaining the agricultural and pastoral economy. Working closely with the Government of Ethiopia (GOE), international and national NGO partners, CARE Ethiopia has over the past decade sought to empower women and girls - economically, socially and politically - as an essential element to building household and community resilience.

Some of CARE Ethiopia's key pathways:

- Integrating CARE's empowering gendered approaches such as Social Analysis and Action (SAA), Community Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA), Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP) and Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA) or Village Economic and Social Association (VESA) to help build resilience to climatic shocks while also improving capacity to adapt to longer-term changes in climate.
- Improving access to economic opportunities for women and girls, especially access to financial facilities and institutions, through CARE's successful VSLA or Village VESA approaches. Facilitating linkages between VSLA and VESA groups with government Rural Savings and Credit Cooperatives (RuSACCOS); establishing additional RuSACCOS; and creating financial access by working with local Micro-finance Institutions (MFIs).
- Improving women's access to agricultural production inputs, market information, and market outlets to sell their produce.

Over a decade of programming shows that empowering women is essential to building resilience of households and communities.

RESILIENCE : The ability of people, households, communities, countries and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Increased Resilience

CARE Ethiopia's GRAD Project uses awareness raising sessions and positive role models to improve attitudes and practices towards women. To assure structural change, the project works with key government actors (such as Ethiopian government health and agricultural workers) to raise awareness of gender issues, analyze key challenges to gender equality and food security, and build strategies to create gender equality and ultimately resilience.

- Supporting women to create and engage in income-earning activities. VSLA/VESA group platforms have also allowed members to make informed and proactive choices about the types of income generating activities to maximize available opportunities.
- Addressing the gender division of labour and the intra-household allocation of food through community and intra household dialogues on social and gender norms so that women can work outside of the household, while ensuring girls don't suffer as a result by having increased workloads and having to drop out of school.
- Promoting gender equality in decision-making about production, the use of resources such as land, water, or capital, and control over income.
- Promoting healthy / positive spousal relationships through joint membership in savings groups, gender trainings and facilitating gender dialogues to increase respect, decision making authority and collaboration between women and their husbands.
- Providing technical support, including extension services for productive activities and nutritional support interventions, including improving longstanding practices related to dietary practices and animal husbandry techniques.
- Supporting the GOE and communities to improve land and water resource management, including promotion of climate smart agricultural crops and techniques, fuel efficient stoves, rangeland management and rehabilitation, expansion of communal grazing enclosures and dismantling inappropriate enclosures, bush management, prescribed fire, re-opening of livestock corridors, seasonal livestock migrations, and water development.
- Integrating Crisis Modifications and Financial Safety Nets including increasing income generation, savings and expansion of assets to help households better absorb and manage shocks and stress from drought.
- Consistently applying and learning from strong analysis – especially Gender and Power to both inform and improve impact in relation to the above.





The Spotlight: What we have learned

Challenges faced by rural Ethiopian women are numerous; but can be addressed and overcome through a comprehensive set of interventions that includes: trainings in technical and business skills, adaptations for women's needs, tackling of gender norms through conversations at the household, VSLA/ VESA and community levels, and access to information and financial services for women, among others.

Tackling Social and Gender Norms is essential

Investing in its own staff transformation through supportive analysis, reflection and discussion to challenge norms and behaviours that limit gender equality is a critical element to CARE Ethiopia's own gender transformative journey and to building integrity in implementing Women's Empowerment programming.

Empowering women and engaging men in a process whereby women and men work together as equally recognised decision-makers and agents of change from the household to the community level, is a crucial pathway toward gender equality, and resilience.

Ensuring staff, partners and communities undertake critical analysis of social inequalities including gender roles and relations, and prioritise effective measures to address gender inequalities is a necessary and long-term investment.

Critical awareness of the social norms and barriers affecting women and girls and effective measures to address gender

CARE Ethiopia's approaches were valuable in reducing vulnerability to climate-related shocks and strengthening the capacity to cope with (absorb) and recover from economic (income and market related), food production and health related shocks.

CARE Ethiopia's experience demonstrates that achieving real and lasting progress toward gender equality requires proactive work with all genders and has developed various models to do this, including couples' curricula, family-based approaches and male role models/ agents for change. These help to ensure that women and girls can access new opportunities to increase their capabilities, and that capability gains are not derailed by the social norms and systemic barriers that can stand in the way of women and girl's empowerment.

inequalities, are key elements for increasing resilience. Increasing women's involvement in agricultural production and associated decision-making processes increase women's food security, resilience to shocks and stresses and that of their families.

Gender relations improve when there is an improvement in women's equality. When supported by clear gender strategies, successful approaches and specific project activities, an improved spousal relationship is an important factor in a family's ability to deal with crisis.

Building on, adapting and combining successful approaches yields greater impact

CARE Ethiopia's integrated and gender empowering approaches such as SAA, VSLA/VESA, CVCA and PSP help plan for and adapt to climate change, diversify risk, build resilience and manage crisis.

Combining VSLA and VESAs with Social Norms Approaches such as CARE's Social Analysis and Action (SAA) leads to greater impact on household savings and positive shifts in gender norms. Contrary to conventional wisdom, having both husbands and wives participate together in the same savings group leads to greater impact on household savings and more women engaging in decision-making.

Providing a comprehensive suite of core activities and drought related relief activities, along with providing skills and access to resources and services that expand household options for income generation, is important for households to better maintain incomes and overall well-being.

Supporting households with productive activities, technical assistance and nutritional support interventions and improving access to income (VSLA/VESA) leads to greater and more

positive coping and adaptive capacities.

Savings and access to finance through VSLA/VESAs are an important coping modality for households affected by drought. VSLA/VESA group platforms also allow members to make informed and proactive choices about types of income generating activities to maximize available opportunities.

Promoting and supporting pro-poor market-based approaches show promise in empowering poor and marginalised people and generating sustainable livelihood and economic opportunities, especially for women and building resilience.

In the face of chronic drought

The trend of recurrent drought in Ethiopia calls for actions and approaches that include both emergency measures (Crisis Modifiers that allow for emergency animal feed, seed for crops, and access to finance) and longer-term efforts such as water conservation/flood water capture, diversification of livelihood streams, and enhanced disaster risk management.

Crisis Modifiers and other emergency / recovery interventions can help families protect their assets, maintain productive activities and critical market linkages, and income gained through long-term development programming.

The diversification of off farm income generating activities have been more successful in helping communities under the difficult circumstances, especially when shifting from traditional agricultural and animal husbandry practices to more value chain oriented agricultural practices.

The complex nature of drought requires long-term investments and consolidation and continuation of successful actions in order to maximize benefits and realize potential impact.

PRIME adapted CARE's Social Analysis and Action (SAA) Approach, to address the underlying drivers of vulnerability to climate change and the socio-cultural and behavioral factors that limit adaptive capacity. The SAA dialogues allow for dialogue around social and cultural norms that determine acceptable behavior, and how these norms establish restrictions on adaptive action by certain groups based on gender, age, disability and/or ethnicity. By bringing together different community members in dialogue and reflection, inequalities are exposed that limit the adaptive capacity of some community members and to identify actions to redress them.

Want more information?

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