



# Pathways ROI Brief

## Pathways Return on Investment

**OVERVIEW** According to communities in Ghana, Malawi, and Mali, the Pathways program generated \$158 million worth of benefits in their lives. That's \$31 of benefit for every \$1 the project spent while working with them. CARE's Pathways Program was made possible with the generous support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The 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 65,000 women farmers, their families, and their communities.

### GOALS

Pathways seeks to increase the productivity and empowerment of women farmers in more equitable agriculture systems at scale. Specific objectives include:

- Increasing the productivity and empowerment of 65,000 poor women farmers in sustainable and

equitable agricultural systems ;

- Enhancing the scale of high-quality women-responsive agricultural programming within and beyond CARE;
- Influencing debates and policy dialog on women and agriculture at local, national, regional and global levels.

### RESULTS

- **High Return on Investments:** There was a \$31 return for every \$1 invested. This number is based on the total benefits derived by the larger community – program participants; their families; their neighbors – from the Pathways program. About 25% of these benefits were felt solely by individuals – farmers, businesses, government actors – who were not a part of the program.
- **Increase in food security:** People said that of the total benefit they received, \$13 worth was an increase in their food security—better diets and more food available to them.
- **Women's empowerment:** 37% of the total return on investment – about \$11 worth – was due to the rise in women's empowerment.

**Want a \$31 Return for Every \$1 Invested?  
Invest in Women Farmers!!**

- **Increase in income:** There was an increase in annual incomes of Pathways families. In Mali incomes increased to \$217 and in Ghana incomes increased to \$545 .



## STRATEGIES

- **Capacity Building:** Participants noted that training and information—building blocks for new skills—were quite important for the manifestation of immediate benefits as well as sustainability of impact.
- **Invest in women:** The project focused heavily on ensuring that women farmers had the same access to information and opportunities as men. Per the ROI, this paid off in a big way.
- **Facilitate Productivity:** Women often mentioned that productivity and income gains gave them the necessary platforms to exercise their rights and expand their roles. Once women got more access and resources, they were able to move into leadership roles.
- **Holistic Thinking:** The integrated approach of Pathways is what made the program work. The project looked at production, markets, nutrition, gender equality and climate resilience. These pieces together made the required impact.

## METHODOLOGY

The New Economics Foundation (NEF) evaluated the Pathways program utilizing a social cost benefit analysis tool to examine the cumulative impact of the program and the expenses incurred along the way. How did they do it?

- **Building on existing M&E:** NEF took data from Pathway’s existing evaluations and combined that with new field data to build a whole picture of impact.
- **Looking for comparisons:** NEF created counterfactual groups—that is, similar groups that had not been in the project—to find out how communities would have fared in the absence of Pathways interventions. NEF found that comparison groups were predominantly worse off than groups that partook in Pathways.
- **Utilizing holistic frameworks:** NEF used their model of dynamic well-being to analyze how the components of the project fit together, and to articulate how women’s empowerment played a critical role in the results.
- **Looking at country contexts:** Context is important to understanding the full picture. Variations always exist across countries. For instance in Mali the return on investment was \$23 while in Ghana it was \$45.



Want to learn more?

Check out the full study [here](#). Or look at the other

### CARE USA

151 Ellis St., Atlanta, Georgia 30033

[pathways@care.org](mailto:pathways@care.org)

T: +1404.376.2566

[www.carepathwaystoempowerment.org](http://www.carepathwaystoempowerment.org)

