



## Pathways: Final Evaluation

# Impact Brief

### OVERVIEW

Pathways was made possible 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 65,000 women farmers, their families, and their communities.

### MISSION

Pathways promotes transformative change in women's lives and the lives of their families by leveraging CARE's expertise in smallholder agriculture, financial inclusion, nutrition, women's empowerment and market engagement.

### RESULTS

- **High return on Investment:** A recent study showed Pathways had a \$31 return for every \$1 invested.

This was split between women's empowerment, improved food security, and higher incomes. 25% of the impact was spillover into the communities of Pathways farmers.

- **Increase in the number of empowered women:** The number of empowered women according to CARE's women empowerment index – a variation of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index – more than doubled in Ghana and Tanzania. Similarly, women's empowerment scores increased an average of 14 points for Mali and Tanzania, and 6 points for India, Ghana, and Malawi.
- **Increase in Women's decision making power:** Women's ability to influence household decisions about assets increased by about 25 percentage points—with the highest impact in Mali at 37 percentage points.
- **More women leaders:** Women in leadership positions increased by about 20 to 60%, depending on the country. In every country, at least 23% more women felt confident in their lives and about speaking out—in Mali, this was an 86% increase.
- **Higher farm incomes:** Over the life of the project, women were able to mobilize \$7,240,676 in income from improved yields and better marketing. The

# 25%

Increase in the number of women able to influence decisions about assets

# A return of \$31

For every \$1 of investment

# 40—65%

Increase in farm income



baseline tells us that in most places, income from farming went up between 40 and 165%. Where farming income did not go up, overall household income still increased. In Ghana, income went up 2.9 times for Pathways households.

- **Improved access to finances:** Pathways participants in all locations cited Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) as the most impactful intervention. Many noted that access to credit was the best outcome from the project. Our reports show that farmers were able to mobilize \$1,885,693 in loans through VSLAs and an additional \$66,736 in loans from formal institutions.
- **Increased quality and quantity of food:** Due to increased yields, farmers were able to produce an extra 537,498 metric tons of food than they would have had with traditional practices. In India and Malawi, there were also significant increases in dietary diversity and women were also able to access more diverse diets within the family.
- **Improved resilience:** Even in an El Nino year with critical droughts, agricultural production went up by as much as 56% for some crops. In places where national yields were dropping by 30-50% (like Malawi), yields for Pathways farmers typically stayed constant or went up.

## STRATEGIES

- **Improve access to extension services:** Women's access to extension more than tripled in every country Pathways worked in. [Farmers' Field and Business Schools](#) were particularly important for providing access to information about extension services.

- **Better access to inputs:** In every country, access to inputs increased by at least 10%. Similarly, in India and Tanzania this number more than doubled. In India, Ghana and Tanzania, SEED replicators and agri-kiosks lowered costs and barriers to high-quality inputs.
- **Improve access to markets:** In Ghana, Tanzania, and Malawi, the number of women who had access to markets nearly doubled.
- **Gender dialogues:** Largely speaking, the changes in women's empowerment are a result of higher incomes and greater respect from their community members. However, these changes were also made possible by dialogues between men and women in which they examine existing relationships to discern how to facilitate gender equality.
- **Male Champions:** Male champions were critical to ensuring that men supported women and treated them equally both as partners and as farmers.
- **Adaptive practices:** The number of people using positive practices to mitigate the risk of future shocks increased in every country. This number more than doubled in Tanzania and nearly doubled in India.
- **Holistic Programming:** According to the [return on investment study](#), no one single intervention was most effective. Rather, it was the combined impact of individual components that resulted in the substantial change created by Pathways.

Check out [www.care.org/pathways](http://www.care.org/pathways) and [www.care.org/ffbs](http://www.care.org/ffbs) to see more documentation on the project.



### CARE USA

151 Ellis St., Atlanta, Georgia 30033

T: +1404.376.2566

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

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

