



Economic Empowerment in Food & Nutrition Programs

In FY20, [CARE's work in Food and Nutrition Security and Climate Change Resilience](#) reached **23 million people directly** and **76 million indirectly** through **819 projects** across **70 countries**.

Many of these Food and Nutrition Security and Climate Change Resilience programs build women's economic empowerment by connecting women to agricultural markets, financial institutions, and productive assets, such as land. In fact, **127 of CARE's FNS and CCR programs reported working in economic development and women's economic empowerment, reaching 5 million people directly, of whom 3 million were women.**

828,488 people in FNS programming used a financial service, such as mobile money, in the last twelve months and data also show that **23,472 women farmers reported access to, control over, or ownership of a core set of productive resources, assets and services.** Globally, 12.4 million lives were impacted by CARE under Sustainable Development Goal 8, which includes indicators for women's financial inclusion, VSLA membership, dignified work, and supplementary Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) indicators.

Interestingly, FNS programs that employ economic development and [women's economic empowerment](#) initiatives show that they *fully engage men and boys* at ten percentage points higher than global programs.

Analysis also shows that FNS programs that intentionally engage in WEE and economic development activities are engaged with civil society strengthening and [climate change](#) programming at 18 percentage points higher than global programs.

So, what are we learning from our most successful work to build markets, develop economies and empower women economically? We're learning that holistic, community-oriented, climate resilient, and gender-transformative programs are the key to the success of our market systems programming.

Strengthening Communities, Cooperatives and Market Access

- ✓ Reinvigorate and establish community action groups and cooperatives, such as [Farmer Field and Business Schools](#), [Village Savings and Loan Associations](#), and Community Development Committees.
- ✓ Connect small-scale producers to input suppliers, wholesalers, distributors, and market information.
- ✓ Bring together women, traditional leaders, government stakeholders, and other community members to identify community problems, challenges, and lines of accountability. Use tools such as CARE's [community score cards](#) and social audits.
- ✓ Support women to establish gainful businesses, such as agri-dealer shops that support food systems.
- ✓ Recognize that humanitarian assistance meant for vulnerable and displaced households is often shared with neighbors, opening opportunities for social cohesion.

Climate Strategy Pathways

- ✓ Use [Participatory Scenario Planning](#) to identify and mitigate climate stressors and shocks, and use community-based Early Warning Systems.
- ✓ Involve traditional forecasters and connect farmers to climate information using digital and traditional methods.
- ✓ Engage women small-scale farmers as climate resilient seed growers and agri-input dealers.
- ✓ Reduce food loss and waste and prepare for drought, pests and food shortages by establishing cereal banks and warrantage systems.

In [CARE Ethiopia's Livelihoods for Resilience Activity](#), CARE and partners are supporting women entrepreneurs, such as Tsige Nigussie, to build small agri-dealer businesses to sell quality agricultural and veterinary products to small-scale producers (or farmers) at affordable prices with funding from USAID. She sells vegetable seeds, animal feed, tools, veterinary products, and other agricultural supplies. Tsige is one of approximately 30 agri-dealers who have opened similar shops to-date with project support. The project, through its Innovation fund, is recruiting an additional 56 agri-dealers to create better access to inputs to the nearly 100,000 project participants and other households in highland communities. With this access, small-scale farmers can increase their production, ensuring food access and graduation from the safety net.



Tsige Nigussie sells agricultural and veterinary inputs in Ethiopia @ CARE 2019

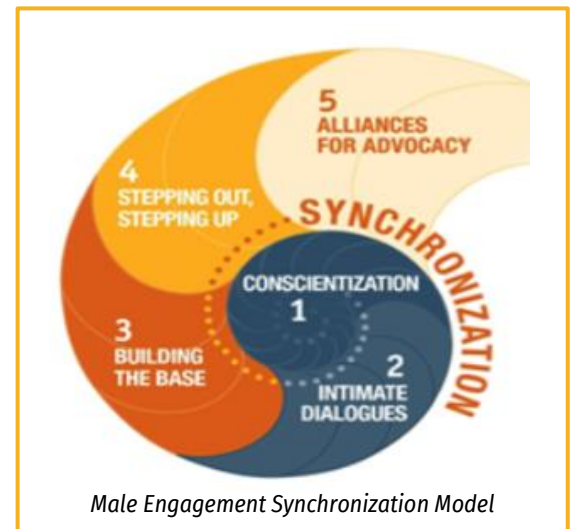
[CARE Ghana's Agro-Source Project](#) promoted entrepreneurial opportunities for women and youth through strong partnerships with the private sector. The program trains agri-input dealers and seed growers and promotes purchase and utilization of agri-inputs while engaging women and improving gender norms and resilience to climate change. The [Agro-Source](#) Project held input fairs to link quality agri-input suppliers to farmers and to provide small-scale women participants with quality, competitively priced agri-inputs and technical information and services to sustain their agricultural livelihoods.



A trained agri-input dealer, Dorcas, in her agri-input shop in Ghana @ CARE 2020

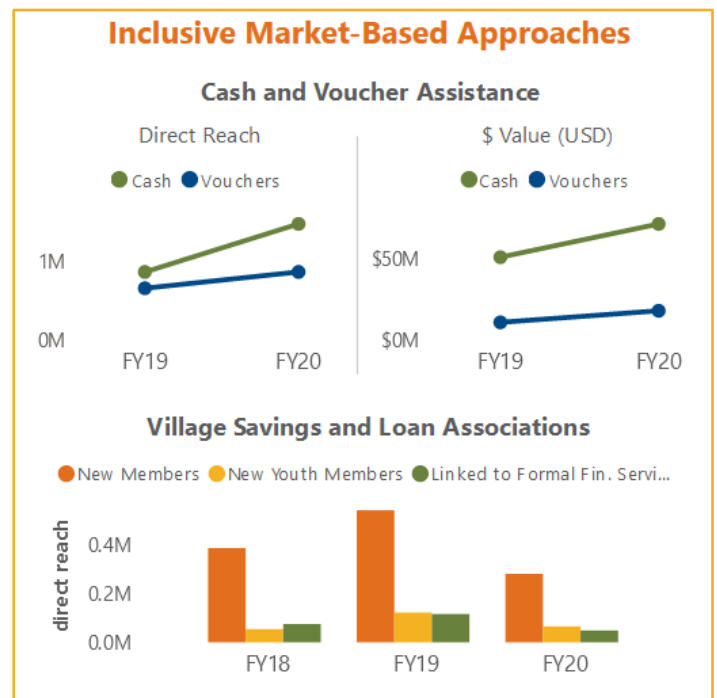
Fully Engaging Men and Boys

- ✓ Synchronize women's empowerment and men's engagement interventions to best support women's empowerment using a cohesive [male engagement approach](#) like [CARE Ethiopia's SPIR Activity](#), from most which of these recommendations are taken.
- ✓ Link male engagement groups and role models with community events and advocacy activities to increase the number of male alliances.
- ✓ Engage with norm holders and influential leaders including mothers-in-law to facilitate tangible and sustainable changes in men's masculine behaviors.
- ✓ Investing in male masculine behavior is as important as investing in women's agency for household gender transformation. Engage men in Couples Workshops to explore gender-based violence, household labor dynamics, women's decision making, and women's economic empowerment.
- ✓ Sensitize input suppliers, wholesalers and other men in agricultural value chains to service women and vulnerable populations.



Room for Improvement

- ✓ Market disruptions and shrinking of labor markets due to COVID-19 were common and widespread, and the impacts of COVID-19 will persist for years to come. This may be good reason to **continue distance-friendly cash and voucher assistance**, which rose from FY19 to FY20.
- ✓ The number of new VSLA members in FWS programs dropped in FY20, due to COVID and expiring programs. FWS programs must redouble our effort to **recover unrealized VSLA members and continue to establish new VSLAs**.
- ✓ Of CARE's 579 FNS programs, only 12 listed the private sector as a main partner, leaving **ample room for growth in CARE-private partnerships**.
- ✓ Nearly 15 million people were reached in rural settings, as compared to 1.2 million people reached in urban settings. Growing cities, growing urban hunger and youth movement opens **opportunity for urban food programing**.
- ✓ 50% of Market programs, and 30% of programs globally scaled with partners. In line with CARE's Vision 2030, FNS should **work robustly with partners to scale FNS programs**.
- ✓ **Enhanced digital engagement** to reach famers and youth is needed.



CARE Bangladesh's Shomoshti II – Prosperity for the Poor and Disadvantaged program partnered with iFarmer to reach disadvantaged populations with equip financing and better livestock management systems. Via this partnership, the livestock farmers have increased livestock skills and strengthened networks with local market actors to avail quality inputs and cattle health services. This same program used the Community Score Care to improve service provision, and men's engagement groups and Couple Workshops to explore and change gender perceptions.