



“I was able to overcome my silence and I was the first to mobilize the women. Our voices were heard by the authorities who agreed to patrol every night to prevent men from entering our houses. This was my greatest achievement, I was not afraid or slowed down by anyone. I spoke in public and in front of everyone in order to defend our rights”.

—Women Lead in Emergencies participant, Niger

Starting in 2020, the number of people who need humanitarian assistance has **risen by 260 million, more than triple the number from 2019**. COVID-19, climate, and conflict are putting lives and livelihoods all over the world, and women are facing a huge portion of the burden—much more than their fair share. The crisis in Ukraine kicked off even more severe and long-lasting impacts, falling on top of safety nets and coping mechanisms that were already too stretched. Women are acting to respond to these multiple, prolonged crises, but we cannot expect them to do it alone.

What are women doing to respond to crises?



1. Feeding their families and communities.
64% of women and 50% of men, said their actions are focused on food security.



2. Running community response.
27% of women and 30% of men in seven countries are leading at the community level: adapting groups to crisis contexts, participating in community response, leading community groups to take action, and sharing information.



3. Paying for safety nets.
47% of women and 41% of men in savings groups are using some savings to support group members. 15% of women and 14% of men also said they had used the social fund to buy food. 51% of VSLA respondents have continued to provide loans for members loans.



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“I want to see more women in community and around the world growing their influence. Imagine the impact if all women had the same opportunities as me!”

—Hawa Abdalnabi, VSLA member in Sudan.

Voices from the Field

“A woman that eats before serving her husband is considered a bad woman, who does not care about her husband other than filling her stomach.”

—Women Focus Group Respondent, Amhara, Ethiopia.

“I used to go to the market after work every day. I went to buy the vegetables and I knew the best places to buy flour and rice. But now, I’m just scared to go outside. ...”

- Woman, male-headed household, Kabul.

“Life is mentally and physically exhausting. We can no longer go to hospitals because healthcare and medicines are so expensive. My children eat less. They no longer have milk because I had to sell my cows. We eat a lot less and we no longer eat vegetables because they are expensive”.

– Women living in a camp in Northeast Syria.

“We sometimes feel hopeless and angry that men aren’t doing anything to help.”

– Women Key Informant respondent, Oromia, Ethiopia.

What are their top three challenges?



1. Earning a living.

Since March 2022, 64% of women and 58% of men reported that their livelihoods have been impacted by crises.



2. Getting meals.

52% of women and 29% of men reported impact on food security. This shows rising food insecurity, especially after the conflict in Ukraine. This also means women are having a harder time growing food.



3. Coping with mental health.

Women are more likely to report stress, and mental health issues – 17% of women compared to 6% of men reported experiencing higher stress and mental health issues since 2020. For women, unpaid care work, income, and food are some of the major causes of stress.

What do Women need now?



Urgent Action to Address Food Insecurity, and Livelihood Impacts



Protection and Mental Health Support



Investments in Women’s Voice, Leadership, and Gender Data

Methodology

Since 2020, 28,173 women in 22 countries have shared their stories, needs, and experiences of leadership. This report represents 6,299 respondents (4,610 women) from nine countries¹ – Afghanistan, Burundi, Cambodia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Iraq, Niger, Nigeria, and Uganda. The data includes survey findings from nine quantitative surveys and insights from 26 RGAs and assessments in 2022, providing insights into the gendered power dynamics and experiences of women and men, boys and girls in conflict, natural disasters, and other crises.

¹ Most of the people in these samples are participants of CARE’s program, which implies that they are among the poorest and most vulnerable people in society. This data does not reflect national level representative surveys.

This summary highlights key findings from [Her Voice: Listening to Women in Action](#) report from March 2023. The full report is available [here](#).

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