



# Impact Brief

## Nourishing the Future: Central America (2019-2022)



Photo Credit: Norman Camal Vásquez

**OVERVIEW** Nourishing the Future aimed to strengthen education, nutrition, and health, promote sustainable agriculture, and improve the livelihoods of women entrepreneurs and producers in farming communities in Central America, reaching **1,485,852 people (961,821 women) directly and indirectly**. The project facilitated livelihood diversification, improved household income, stronger market linkages, increased access to productive resources among women, and women's economic empowerment.

### Background

Nourishing the Future was implemented across Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua between September 2019 and August 2022 in partnership with Cargill. The project focused on five main areas of change, including:

- 1) Women's Empowerment
- 2) Access to Productive Resources
- 3) Access to Inclusive Markets
- 4) Nutrition
- 5) Strategic Partnerships

Nourishing the Future reached **55,599 people (33,201 women)** directly and **1,430,253 people (928,620 women)** indirectly. CARE used an integrated approach, focused on women, smallholder producers, and their families to facilitate access to the resources, support, information, skills and confidence they needed to invest in their farms, businesses, families and communities. Through PROSPER II, microentrepreneurs and producers – especially women – boosted their production, increased their income, and become more resilient in the face of COVID-19 and back-to-back hurricanes.

**16.8%**

increase in women farmers' access to output markets, up from 25.4% at baseline

Proportion of households living below the poverty line in Guatemala and Honduras fell by

**14.1% & 1.5%**

Producer and microentrepreneurs' annual income

**tripled**

from \$422 to \$1,499 per-capita

## Key Accomplishments & Impact

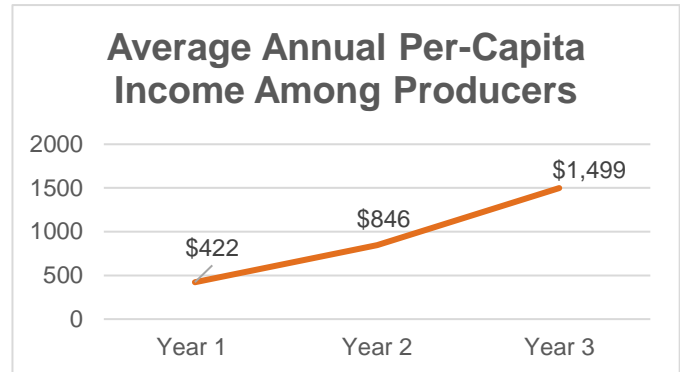
### Women's Empowerment & Access to Productive Resources

- Nourishing the Future facilitated 400 trainings with 9,135 people (8,236 women) that focused on gender equity, human rights, leadership, and prevention of gender-based violence, in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.
- As a result of our interventions, women become more empowered to engage in economic activity. The percentage of women with greater capacity (information, equipment, savings, etc.) to perform economic activity increased from 68.5% to 85.8% at the regional level, according to the final evaluation.
- The project supported 3,152 producers (2,624 women) across all four countries with support to access to productive resources. This included provision of technical training and support, hosting experience exchanges between producers, distribution of agricultural inputs (i.e., fertilizer) to those affected by Hurricane's Eta and Iota and linking producers to producer collectives and rural banks. As a result, there was a 3.1% increase in the proportion of women with access to, control over, and ownership of a core set of productive resources, assets and services at the regional level.
- These activities also facilitated changes in production practices, specifically among livestock and tilapia producers. According to the final evaluation, 63% of livestock and tilapia producers adopted at least three new agricultural practices or technologies – up from 36.2% at baseline.
- As a result of these combined approaches, yields increased across several value chains. Honduran producers doubled their corn, tilapia and bean yields. Producers in Nicaragua increased their sorghum and tilapia production by 35.7% and 23%, respectively, and Guatemalan producers increased their red bean production by 50%.

### Inclusive Markets

- The project facilitated greater access to markets by linking producers with producer collectives and local municipal fairs as well as partnering with private organizations and government authorities to identify income-generating opportunities for families.

- As a result, market participation increased at a regional level by 16.8%, from 25.4% at baseline to 42.2% at endline, mainly through linkages with producer collectives. At the same time, formal market linkages increased, with 58.9% of women actively participated in Cargill's business supply chains, an increase from 19.4% at baseline.
- Improved access to productive resources, markets, and women's empowerment led to enhanced capabilities to engage in economic activities, improved yield, and ultimately led to increased income at both the producer- and household-levels. Between baseline and endline, 2,897 producers (2,598 women) tripled their average per-capita annual income, from \$422 to \$1,499. At the regional level, household income increased by 39.5% on average, from \$3,283 to \$4,581. These outcomes ultimately led to poverty reduction.
- As a result of the project's integrated approach – cutting across five areas of change - the proportion of households living below the national poverty line decreased, by 14.1% in Guatemala (from 52.3% at baseline to 38.2% at endline) and by 1.5% in Honduras (from 54.9% at baseline to 53.4% at endline) despite COVID and two major hurricanes.
- In Guatemala, increased income had a significant impact on food security, with the prevalence of the population with moderate or severe food insecurity decreasing by 28.6%.



### Nutrition

- Altogether, 49,297 schoolchildren, teachers, and parents (29,357 women) were reached across all four countries through the promotion of nutritious foods and health habits via the establishment of 1,611 vegetable gardens, distribution of informative materials, and organized events.
- As an adaptation to the impacts of COVID-19, the project distributed informative materials and produced short videos on food preparation, nutrition, food safety as well as on handwashing and other COVID prevention measures.
- Overall, Nourishing the Future positively impacted households. At endline, there was a 5% increase in households reporting a change in nutritional behavior and healthy lifestyles at the regional level, up from 77.1% at baseline.

### Strategic Partnerships

- To influence policy and advocacy and scale our impact, the project facilitated collaborations with 16 local and national authorities throughout the region and developed nine partnerships with civil society organizations and universities.
- This led to greater government budget allocations for gender-equity and extension services in Guatemala and Honduras.



- In Honduras – a country with one of the largest gaps in gender inequality in Latin America – our advocacy actions and work to strengthen the municipal women’s office led to the approval of the first-of-its-kind gender policy in Villanueva municipality, recognizing the human rights, non-discrimination, and economic empowerment of women. Based on this gender policy, the municipality committed to allocate more resources to the municipal women’s office (beyond the current 5%).
- And in Guatemala, another success story involved the signing of an agreement between CARE and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to assign 45 technicians to replicate project training on nutrition/healthy eating with 2,841 people in Chimaltenango and Escuintla.



## Conclusion

Despite the challenging climate of this project as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, hurricanes in 2020, economic crisis in Nicaragua, and high inflation rates coupled with shortages of grain and fertilizer caused by the Ukraine crisis, the project

positively impacted communities across the four countries. Nourishing the Future helped producers triple their per-capita income through stronger market linkages and greater yield, improved access to agricultural productive resources like training and inputs, supported producers’ recovery following Hurricanes Eta and Iota, and ensured access to nutritious food through the establishment of 1,611 vegetable gardens.