



PROSPER II: Promoting a Sustainable and Food Secure World (September 2019 – August 2022)

Final Report

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Introduction

CARE and Cargill’s partnership extends more than 60 years and is a testament to the values we share. **Since 2008, CARE and Cargill have reached more than 4.6 million people, 600,000 people directly and 4 million indirectly, through 34 projects in 13 countries. Of those reached, more than 2.4 million are women.**

Our work has tackled complex issues spanning smallholder agriculture, market access, women’s economic empowerment, nutrition, child labor, education, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Beyond the tremendous impact of our efforts on the ground, our partnership has contributed greatly to CARE’s global food and nutrition security approach, informing our signature initiative, *She Feeds the World* (SFtW).

SFtW builds on CARE’s decades of experience promoting an integrative approach to food and nutrition security. SFtW not only emphasizes access to critical inputs like water, land, seeds, finance and access to markets, but also includes an explicit focus on nutrition, safety nets and social protection in times of crisis. Critically, SFtW puts women’s empowerment at the heart of everything we do. The program works directly with women to strengthen their skills and confidence in sustainable agriculture practices, financial inclusion, market engagement, gender equality, and food and nutrition security – while also engaging with men and boys to support efforts for greater equality.

SFtW has six interrelated pathways to increasing food and nutrition security for small-scale producers including:

- Women’s empowerment
- Increasing women’s access to and control of productive resources
- Enabling women’s access to inclusive markets
- Improving nutrition
- Social protection
- Multiplying impact



To continue to push the envelope on high quality programming, SFtW harnesses cutting-edge research and innovation. Evidence-based tools and practices link women to resources and markets, improve family nutrition, and break down the barriers that trap small-scale women producers and their families in poverty. SFtW goes **beyond productivity** and emphasizes the importance of **cultivating equality**. CARE uses evidence from research and innovation to build strategic partnerships, and advocacy and influencing strategies to fuel structural changes and scale up proven approaches to improve women’s food and nutrition security.

As CARE and Cargill enter our second decade of strategic partnership, together we seek to drive greater impact and scale in our efforts to support rural communities around the globe. **Promoting a Sustainable and Food Secure World II (PROSPER II)** is the current three-year phase of the CARE-Cargill partnership. It amplifies the success of previous programming, scales proven approaches, and explores new opportunities to promote a sustainable and food secure world. PROSPER II aligns with and contributes to SFTW and aims to **increase the food and nutrition security and climate change resilience of 2 million people.**

Geographies






This consolidated report covers in-cycle PROSPER II programming in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Indonesia.



Central America	Africa	Asia
Costa Rica Guatemala Honduras Nicaragua	Côte d'Ivoire Ghana	Indonesia

Monitoring & Evaluation Framework

PROSPER II programming commits to measuring impact under one common results framework. The results framework is an overarching framework which all countries in the global program use to align their monitoring and evaluation systems and report program progress, outcomes and impact. This framework was informed by CARE's SFtW monitoring and evaluation framework, the Sustainable Development global framework, and Cargill's sustainability framework.

Impacts and Outcomes		High Level Impact and Outcome Indicators	
Improved food security and nutrition of 2 million people		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % with moderate or severe food insecurity, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) • Mean household dietary diversity scores • Proportion of the population below the national poverty line 	
Total Program Reach			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # direct & # indirect beneficiaries reached by the project (disaggregated by sex) • # direct & # indirect farmers reached by the project (disaggregated by sex, farmers part of Cargill supply chains, and farmers receiving technical expertise from Cargill) • # direct & # indirect beneficiaries of nutrition interventions (disaggregated by sex) • # community groups established (disaggregated by type – VSLA, producer groups, youth groups, CDCOMS, WASH committees, etc.) 			
Areas of Change	Types of Activities	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
 <p>Access to and control of productive resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land • Water • Inputs • Technologies and information • Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # VSLA or other saving groups established • # VSLA or other saving group members • Total amount distributed in loans to VSLA or other saving group members • Total amount saved by VSLA or other saving groups members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % farmers women with access to, control over, or ownership of a core set of productive resources, assets, and services • % women farmers with sole and/or joint decision-making regarding agricultural production • # and % of women who are active users of financial services • Area of land under sustainable agricultural and natural resource management practices • % farmers adopting at least three new agricultural technologies or practices • Yield or productivity per unit area
 <p>Inclusive markets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive value chain and market systems analysis • Food processing and value addition • Collective marketing skills and structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of new employment • # of sustainable enterprises supported • # of marketing committees (MC) established at FFBS level • # of producers with linkages/transactions with input stores, intermediaries and buyers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of women farmers accessing output markets to sell agricultural production • % women farmers accessing agricultural inputs • % of farmers who report being part of Cargill's supply chain • Total agricultural production sold (disaggregate by market including local markets, Cargill, etc.) • % increase in household income
 <p>Nutrition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting positive nutrition practices • Homestead food production • Improved sanitation and water access • System strengthening and coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # direct & # indirect beneficiaries of nutrition interventions (disaggregated by sex) • # of school gardens established • # of homestead garden established • # of school meals provided • # of cooking demonstrations conducted • # of women of reproductive age and participating men who can correctly cite 5 out of 10 defined food groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of women (15-49 years) who consume at least 5 out of 10 defined food groups (MDDW) • # of children 6–23 months of age who receive a minimum acceptable diet (MAD) • Mean dietary diversity score for children of school going age • # and % of households who report a change in nutrition behavior • # of households consuming vegetables from household production
 <p>Strategic partnerships and influencing policy and practice through advocacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy and influencing for scale • Partnerships and platforms • Innovation and research • Evidence and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of engagements (meetings, policy roundtables) with local and national government to share successes, learning, or approaches to influence government • # of alliances/partnership developed with public and private sectors • # of knowledge products developed and disseminated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New or amended policies, legislation, public programs, and/or budgets responsive to the rights, needs, and demands of people of all genders
 <p>Women's Empowerment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building agency: strengthening women's capacities, confidence and skills • Changing relations: enabling more equal relationships and social norms • Transforming structures: influencing formal and informal institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of gender analysis • # of gender dialogue sessions held • # of beneficiaries reached through gender dialogues (disaggregated by sex) • # of women in VSLAs • # of trainings organized to enhance women's leadership and negotiation skills • # of trainings organized to build women's skills and capabilities • # of women performing economic activities • # of staff trained on SAA • # of communities and people (women & men) administered with the Progress Markers monitoring tool to track behavior changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's Empowerment Index (women's 5 domains of empowerment score, adapted from WEAI) • # and % of women holding leadership positions in community groups or associations • % women with increased capability to perform economic activity • % of women who (report they) are able to equally participate in household financial decision-making • % of people (women & men) who have meaningfully participated in formal and informal decision-making spaces • % of people (women & men) who could work collectively with others to achieve common goals • % men who spend time on unpaid domestic care work

Country Summaries

Côte d'Ivoire. The three-year PROSPER II project delivered economic and social empowerment support in 23 cocoa-producing communities, reaching 8,572 people directly (5,757 women) and 55,718 people indirectly (37,421 women) – **118% of the overall target**. Highlights include: 1) Created 306 VSLAs with 7,896 members (5,436 women) with \$748,183 saved and \$345,883 distributed in loans; 2) Linked 161 VSLAs with 4,347 members (3,260 women) to Advans microfinance institution; 3) Networked 101 VSLAs with 2,275 members (1,820 women); 4) Established 395 income-generating activities (poultry, food crops and off-farm), generating \$145,589; 5) Held 880 couples dialogues with 3,279 people (1,981 women) to promote gender equality; 6) Trained 813 people (568 women) on leadership skills; 7) Reached 8,572 people directly (5,757 women) and 55,718 indirectly (37,421 women) through nutrition sessions/promotion; 8) Opened 50 new literacy centers for 750 adult learners (510 women); 9) Onboarded 10 VSLAs with 267 members (176 women) to pilot the Chomoka app/digitize group activities; and 10) Installed 13 water pumps, constructed seven schools, one teachers house, two maternity hospitals, one midwives house, 627 toilets, 1,000 traditional handwashing stations, and delivered an ambulance. **Key impacts:**

- Income increased by 53%, from an annual per-capita average of \$663 to \$1,015.
- Households living below the national poverty line fell from 61.6% at baseline to 3.5% at endline.
- Respondents not worried about running out of food over past 12 months rose from 28% to 65%.
- Women holding leadership positions in their community increased from 27% to 81%.
- Women consuming a minimum acceptable diet increased from 20% to 95%.
- The percentage of women who can equally participate in household financial decision-making increased over two-fold, from 25% at baseline to 65% at endline.

Ghana. PROSPER II improved the food security and economic empowerment of 157 cocoa-producing communities (96 existing/61 new), reaching 14,065 people directly (9,218 women) and 56,260 indirectly (36,872 women) – **120% of the overall target**. Highlights include: 1) Established 570 VSLAs with 14,065 members (9,218 women) with \$751,779 saved and \$520,025 provided in loans; 2) Trained 13,563 VSLA members (8,885 women) on entrepreneurship, resulting in 1,408 income-generating activities established by 1,408 people (1,103 women); 3) Trained community development committees in all 61 new communities, with 721 members (230 women), who have mobilized \$47,619 in support of community-initiated projects; 4) Sensitized 14,065 people (9,218 women) on optimal nutrition, including 150 cooking demonstrations with 13,875 people (9,157 women) and establishing 13,142 home gardens; 5) Organized 366 gender dialogue sessions with 14,065 people (9,218 women) and also reached those people through 157 nutrition dialogue sessions to address myths around the foods that women and children can and cannot eat; 6) Onboarded 83 VSLAs onto the Chomoka app, helping 2,320 farmers (1,554 women) to digitize their activities; and 7) Constructed six schools and 895 traditional handwashing stations to reduce the spread of COVID-19. **Key impacts:**

- Households living below the poverty line reduced from 30% to 22.1%.
- Households that are moderately and severely food insecure dropped from 85.4% to 72.1%.
- Households that ran out of food because of lack of money/resources reduced from 71.3% to 45.8%.
- Women saving with financial institutions increased from 32.8% to 73%.
- Women increasing their capability to do economic activities rose from 3.8% to 26.6%.
- Households eating at least five out of the 10 food groups increased from 57% to 77.8%.
- Women holding leadership positions in their community increased from 27.1% to 60.5%.

Central America. Nourishing the Future worked to ensure food security with equal access to markets, control of productive resources and increased resilience to climate change across Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua (prior to early closure in January 2022). We reached 55,599 people directly (33,201 women) and 1,430,253 people indirectly (928,620 women) – **117% of the overall target**. Despite the impacts of COVID-19, economic crisis and hurricanes Eta and Iota, we adapted to achieve these key successes: 1) Provided technical assistance to 3,152 farmers (2,614 women) in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua and virtual

learning exercises to standardize production processes for tilapia, pork and basic grains; 2) The income generated by 2,897 producers and microentrepreneurs (2,598 women) in Guatemala and Honduras more than tripled, from \$368,074 net income/\$422 per capita in Year 1 to \$1,792,728 net income/\$1,499 per capita in Year 3; 3) Provided 400 trainings on gender equity, human rights, leadership and gender-based violence prevention with 9,135 people (including 8,236 women producers, microentrepreneurs, teachers and mothers of students as well as 899 male leaders); 4) Reached 49,297 schoolchildren, teachers and parents across all four countries through the promotion of nutritious foods/healthy eating at school and home; 5) Supported 1,611 vegetable gardens (58 school gardens, 1,545 family gardens and eight community gardens) across the four countries; 6) Designed 18 materials in Costa Rica and Honduras on healthy eating, nutrition, gender equality and violence prevention, delivered to schoolchildren, mothers and teachers; 7) The graduation process of model schools concluded in August 2022 (for the first subset of 13 schools – six in Honduras, five in Guatemala and two in Costa Rica); 8) Cargill volunteers supported family and school gardens and participated in events/fairs to promote the consumption of local food and good hygiene. 9) CARE's alliance with municipal governments started to bear fruit in terms of budgeting to replicate activities in other communities not served by the project; and 10) CARE, through our participation in coalitions, has been influencing women's empowerment legislation that could potentially benefit more than 5 million women in Guatemala (Economic Development Law) and Honduras (CREDIMUJER Act) in the coming year. **Key impacts:**

- Decreased the proportion of households living below the national poverty line, from 52.3% to 38.2% in Guatemala and from 54.9% to 53.4% in Honduras despite COVID and affects from two hurricanes.
- Average household income at the regional level increased by 39.5%, from \$3,283 at baseline to \$4,581 at endline.
- Increased women's capacity (information, equipment, savings, etc.) to perform economic activities at the regional level from 68.5% to 85.8%.
- The proportion of women with access to, control over, or ownership of a core set of productive resources, assets, and services increased from 18.4% to 21.5%.
- Overall, the final evaluation showed positive impact across 16 of the 23 indicators (70%), demonstrating the resilience of project participants compared to the baseline. Without project interventions, the negative effects of shocks faced by project participants (a pandemic, economic crisis and two hurricanes) would have been far worse.

Indonesia. PROSPER II enhanced the well-being of children in 10 elementary schools in Serang and Bone districts through the reduction of infectious diseases and access to nutritious food. COVID-19 was a challenge, but schools reopened in Year 3 on a 50/50 in-class/virtual basis allowing delayed activities to be completed. PROSPER II reached 3,528 people directly (1,776 women/girls) and 13,778 family members indirectly (7,105 women/girls) – **121% of the overall target**. Highlights include: 1) Constructed 10 toilet facilities, directly benefiting 3,528 students, teachers and school community members (1,776 women/girls) and indirectly 13,778 family members (7,108 women/girls) through uptake of healthy behaviors; 2) Trained a WASH and nutrition committee at each of the 10 schools (62 members/29 women) and 55 school representatives (30 women) on maintaining sanitation facilities; 3) Renovated 10 school canteens; 4) Trained 29 teachers (18 women) and 76 students (49 girls) from four replication schools in Serang on maintaining toilets provided by the government; 5) Conducted training-of-trainers with 32 participants (22 women) on the little doctor approach; 6) Provided little doctor training to 150 students (71 girls), who then reached 750 classmates/family members; 6) Conducted school gardening training in four schools with 100 participants (70 women) and created demonstration gardens; 7) Held a training-of-trainers workshop on nutrition with 27 participants (21 women) from PROSPER II schools as well as with 46 participants (35 women) from replication schools in Serang; 8) Trained 45 canteen managers and traders (37 women) on business/financial skills and food quality; 9) Held a workshop with 41 school representatives (21 women) on developing policies to prevent sexual harassment and on building a network for community-based child protection; and 10) The Serang government contributed about \$650,000 to replicate the PROSPER approach in 80 schools (since 2018) and the Bone government committed to using little doctor modules in 38 community health centers and 200 schools, benefiting at least 20,000 students (8,000 girls) in that district. **Key impacts:**

- The 10 target schools have 100% functioning toilets, compared to 80% at baseline. The latrine ratio (1:40 for boys/1:38 for girls) far outweighs the government standard (1:60 for boys/1:50 for girls).
- Students being absent from school due to diarrhea in the past two weeks (when baseline and endline studies) were done fell from 8.8% to 2.4%.
- The percentage of students reporting handwashing at school increased from 91.8% at baseline to 99.6% at endline.
- The percentage of students reporting daily fruit and vegetable consumption increased by 23.1%, from 45.8% to 68.9%.

Engagement Highlights

Employee Engagement

- In Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras, Cargill supported the graduation process of model schools that concluded in August 2022 for the first subset of 13 schools.
- In Ghana, Cargill worked closely with CARE and district assemblies on the construction of six schools, benefiting 700 children (357 girls).
- In Guatemala, Cargill volunteers established a vegetable nursery and delivered plants to families to use in home gardens.
- In Honduras, the *Together We Are Stronger* campaign with Cargill resulted in a historic private sector effort to deliver 275,000 food rations to 1,000 hurricane-affected families.
- In Indonesia, Cargill helped train WASH and nutrition committees and supported Global Handwashing Day activities with students.

Supply Chain

- In Côte d'Ivoire, CARE created 306 VSLAs with 7,896 members (5,436 women) who saved \$748,183 and provided \$345,883 in loans to support 395 additional livelihoods outside of cocoa activities.
- In Ghana, CARE created 570 VSLAs with 14,065 members (9,218 women) who saved \$751,779 and provided \$520,025 in loans to support additional livelihoods with an estimated \$638/year per capita income to help families during the lean cocoa season.
- In Guatemala and Honduras, the income of 2,897 producers and microentrepreneurs (2,598 women) more than tripled by the project's third year despite COVID-19, economic crisis and two hurricanes, with an increase in per capita income from \$422 to \$1,499.

Media/Communications

- CARE and Cargill published the [Decade of Impact in Cocoa Communities report](#).
- CARE and Cargill presented at the Cracking the Nut conference on Leveraging the Power of Partnerships to Address Inequities and Strengthening Farmer Livelihoods in Cocoa Growing Communities.
- CARE and Cargill spoke on a panel at Concordia (2022) for Food Equals Future: Investing in Women and Girls to Tackle Global Hunger.
- CARE and Cargill organized a global content capture in Central America, Ghana and Indonesia to document PROSPER II program participants and Cargill's regional representatives. The visual and written content will be used to amplify the impact of PROSPER II as part of upcoming global communications.

Policy and Advocacy

- In Côte d'Ivoire, CARE networked 101 VSLAs with 2,275 members (1,820 women) to increase civil society participation and negotiation power.
- In Ghana, CDCs mobilized \$47,619 for community-initiated projects and secured 18 additional engagements with district assemblies/government agencies.
- In Guatemala, CARE participates in the coalition that promotes the Economic Development Law, which, if approved by Congress, would benefit more than 2.5 million women in the country.
- In Honduras, CARE promotes the CREDIMUJER Act, which would benefit more than 2.6 million rural women with access to loans.
- In Indonesia, the Bone government will use little doctor training in 38 health centers and 200 schools, and Serang government invested \$650,000 to replicate PROSPER in 80 schools.

PROSPER II Reach (Overall)

Country	Direct Reach	Direct Reach (Women)	Indirect Reach	Indirect Reach (Women)	Total Direct & Indirect Reach (Women)	Total Direct & Indirect Reach	% Progress Against Target
Benin Cotton Phase I & II*	2,982	1,958	23,856	15,664	17,662	26,838	100%+
Côte d'Ivoire Cotton Phase I & II*	3,132	1,690	20,358	10,985	12,675	23,490	100%+
Côte d'Ivoire	8,572	5,757	55,718	37,421	43,178	64,290	100%+
Central America**	55,599	33,201	1,430,253	928,620	961,821	1,485,852	100%+
Egypt COVID-19 Response	3,600	1,800	7,200	3,600	5,400	10,800	100%
Ghana	14,065	9,218	56,260	36,872	46,090	70,325	100%+
Indonesia	3,528	1,776	13,778	7,105	8,881	17,306	100%+
Indonesia COVID-19 Response***	45,209	22,627	-	-	22,627	45,209	100%+
Mali	4,418	2,273	2,845	1,461	3,734	7,263	100%+
Philippines COVID-19 Response	49,414	28,831	220,769	161,447	190,278	270,183	100%+
Total****	190,519	109,131	1,831,037	1,203,175	1,312,346	2,021,556	100%+

* Benin and Côte d'Ivoire Cotton program participant reach is shown as cumulative to avoid double counting.

** COVID-19 and Hurricane Eta response reached Nourishing the Future beneficiaries and are captured in the totals. Targets were 100% reached across both efforts.

*** Program participant reach for Indonesia COVID-19 response has been adjusted to avoid double counting.

**** Progress against overall PROSPER II target of 2 million people (97,410 directly and 1.9 million indirectly).

Ghana

Project Name:	PROSPER II – Supporting Cocoa-Farming Communities
Project Location:	Western and Western North Regions
Project Period:	September 2019 – August 2022
Reporting Period:	Final Report
Gift Amount:	\$1,886,941
CARE Contact:	Dr. Maria Hinson Tobin



Executive Summary

The PROSPER II project in Ghana sought to directly improve the food and nutrition security and empowerment of 11,700 people in 157 cocoa-producing communities (96 from the previous phase/61 new) in the Western region. Note that at the start of the final year of the project we added one more “new” community, thus increasing the number to 61. Overall, PROSPER II made great strides toward improving the financial, nutritional and socio-economic empowerment of these communities, while also adhering to COVID-19 protocols. The project **directly reached 14,065 people (9,218 women) and indirectly reached 56,260 people (36,872 women), representing 120% of the overall target** of 11,700 direct participants and 46,800 indirect participants. This CARE-Cargill project achieved the following topline results after three years of implementation:

- The proportion of **households living below the poverty line was significantly reduced from 30% at baseline to 22.1% at endline**. The qualitative findings revealed that project activities such as training project participants on income-generating activities have to some extent contributed to reducing poverty levels.
- Formed and trained community development committees (CDCs) in all 61 new communities, with 721 members (230 women), who have led their communities to mobilize \$47,619 in support of community-initiated projects. These 61 CDCs developed community action plans with 184 projects prioritized, of which communities have locally completed 112 (61%) of identified needs, 14 (8%) are in progress, and the remaining 58 (31%) are still pending/in the planning stage.
- Established 570 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) in 157 communities, with 14,065 members (9,218 women). These VSLAs have saved \$751,779.30 with \$520,024.80 distributed in loans to support their farming and income-generating activities (IGAs) and access to money to address any food insecurity issues. **This led to a more than two-fold increase in active women users of financial services, from 32.8% at baseline to 73% at endline.**
- On the food security front, **the proportion of households that ran out of food because of lack of money or other resources reduced from 71.3% at baseline to 45.8% at endline**. The proportion of households going without food for an entire day due to a lack of money or other resources **decreased significantly from 38% to 14.3%**. There was a substantial decrease in the severity of

food insecurity, with the proportion of households that are **moderately and severely food insecure dropping from 85.4% to 72.1%**.

- Conducted entrepreneurial trainings with 13,563 VSLA members (8,885 women) from 545 groups, leading to the establishment of 1,408 IGAs/additional livelihoods by 1,408 people (1,103 women). These IGAs had a total startup capital of \$144,217 from VSLA loans, a cumulative monthly income of \$74,813, estimated annual income of \$897,756 and per capita income of \$638/year, contributing to **increased income and ability to meet both household and individual needs**, especially during the lean cocoa season.
- Sensitized 14,065 people (9,218 women) on optimal nutrition practices. This activity, combined with 150 cooking demonstrations with 13,875 people (9,157 women) and establishment of 13,142 home gardens, led to greater awareness of healthy nutrition practices and ultimately an **improvement in household dietary diversity**, from a baseline score of 4.9 to 5.8 at endline (out of 10). In addition, the mean dietary diversity score of women of reproductive age (15-49) appreciated from 5.0 to 5.8, and the mean dietary score of children increased from 4.1 to 4.6. The findings further show an **increase in the percentage of households that eat at least five out of the 10 food groups, from 57% to 77.8%** (including a rise in women of reproductive age by 13.5% between baseline and endline).
- Held a total of 366 gender dialogue sessions with 14,065 people (9,218 women) in 157 communities to address inequities in workloads and household decision-making, contributing to **53.7% of women reporting increased control of income at endline, compared to 32.8% at baseline**, and 94.5% of women now able to equally participate in household financial decision making, compared to 91% at baseline. Similarly, the same people were trained on leadership and negotiation skills, contributing to **60.5% of women holding leadership positions in community groups and associations, up from 27.1% at baseline**.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- The proportion of households living below the poverty line decreased by 7.9%, from 30% at baseline to 22.1% at endline.
- The proportion of households that ran out of food because of lack of money or other resources fell by 25.5%, from 71.3% at baseline to 45.8% at endline.
- Household dietary diversity scores improved, from a baseline score of 4.9 to 5.8 at endline (out of 10), with the percentage of households that eat at least five out of the 10 food groups increasing from 57% to 77.8%.
- Use of financial services among women increased more than two-fold, with the proportion of active women users of financial services rising from 32.8% at baseline to 73% at endline.
- Women's participation in leadership positions increased more than two-fold, with 60.5% of women holding leadership positions in community groups and associations, up from 27.1% at baseline.
- Over half (53.7%) of women reported increased control of income at endline, compared to 32.8% at baseline, and 94.5% of women now able to equally participate in decision making, compared to 91% at baseline.

COVID-19 Context

To date, there have been 170,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 1,459 deaths in Ghana. About 27% of the 31 million population has been fully vaccinated. At the end of March 2022, the President of Ghana announced new protocols, including that wearing facemasks was no longer mandatory; enhanced handwashing/hygiene was still to be practiced; overcrowded gatherings were to be avoided; and in-person activities in churches, mosques, conferences, workshops, theaters, etc. could resume to full

capacity if the audience/participants are fully vaccinated.

Faced with this pandemic since March 2020, along with initial stricter protocols, the project workplan was adjusted to meet the health needs of communities, including training community volunteers to conduct COVID-19 prevention and vaccination awareness sessions in project areas; reaching VSLA groups using pre-recorded messages on audio devices (pen drives) in the local language; and providing personal protective equipment/facemasks during project meetings. All project staff members were vaccinated. During the project, we supported households in building 895 traditional tippy tap handwashing stations in all 157 communities, benefiting 27,215 people (12,017 women). We also distributed boxes of Colgate soap (12 pieces per box) to 8,047 VSLA members (4,902 women) to promote handwashing. **Overall, our COVID-19 sensitization and vaccination efforts contributed to a total of 32,196 people (19,608 women) being fully vaccinated.**



VSLA members in Nkatieso community with their vaccination cards.

Project Achievements

CARE used an integrated approach under the *She Feeds the World* framework, focusing on women, youth and smallholder producers to enable them to access the resources, support, information, skills and confidence they needed to invest in their farms, businesses, families and communities. This resulted in the promotion of financial inclusion, women’s empowerment, improved nutrition behaviors and strengthened community governance. Through PROSPER II, farmers – especially women – boosted their production and generated income that they used to send their children to school, feed their families, expand their businesses and create a culture of savings to help them withstand shocks like the pandemic and rise in food prices.

Since the inception of PROSPER II in September 2019, CARE has reached 14,065 people directly (9,218 women) and 56,260 people indirectly (36,872 women) through VSLAs, nutrition, community governance and women’s empowerment initiatives. **This represents 120% of our overall target (11,700 direct/46,800 indirect) after three years of implementation.**

KPI	Direct Reach	Direct Reach (Women)	Direct Reach (Men)	Indirect Reach	Indirect Reach (Women)	Indirect Reach (Men)	Total Direct & Indirect Reach (Women)	Total Direct & Indirect Reach
# of people reached	14,065	9,218	4,847	56,260	36,872	19,388	46,090	70,325
# of farmers reached	12,370	7,958	4,412	49,480	31,832	17,648	39,790	61,850
# of people reached with nutrition interventions	14,065	9,218	4,847	56,260	36,872	19,388	46,090	70,325

KPI	Total	Women	Men
# farmers part of Cargill's supply chain	9,143	5,852	3,291
# farmers receiving technical assistance from Cargill	9,143	5,852	3,291

KPI	Total
# VSLAs or other saving groups established	570
# CDCs established	157*

*157 CDCs established in the 96 existing and 61 new communities.

Change Area 1: Women's empowerment.

The capacities of 9,218 women within 157 VSLAs were built on leadership, negotiation, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, resource mobilization and nutrition to help strengthen women's sense of self, develop confidence, provide opportunities for women to speak out and play an important role in their communities and households.

The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) is constructed from five domains of empowerment (5DEs) namely, decision-making over production, access to and decision-making over productive resources, control over the use of income, leadership in the community, and time use. The 5DEs scores range from 0 (being disempowered) to 1 (being empowered). Overall, the **WEAI has improved from a baseline value 0.59 to an endline value of 0.78. Across the 5DEs, women have experienced significant improvements, particularly in control over the use of income (by 0.67 points) and leadership in the community (by 0.4 points) with 60.5% of women holding leadership positions in community groups and associations at endline, compared to 27.1% at baseline. The empowerment index of men also improved from 0.70 to 0.77.**

Entrepreneurship training and development. CARE, in collaboration with the Ghana Enterprises Agency, provided entrepreneurial training to 13,563 VSLA members (8,885 women) from 545 VSLAs in the 157 communities. The trainings focused on the selection, planning, packaging, pricing and management of income-generating activities (IGAs) as additional livelihoods. IGAs include making soap and pomade (for hair), baking, beekeeping, growing mushrooms, pork and poultry. As a result of these entrepreneurial trainings which focused on the selection of IGAs, planning the IGAs launch and managing the IGA's risks and cashflow, participants were able to make informed decisions on IGAs that are sustainable and profitable, with minimal startup costs and using resources that are readily available. **Sixty-six percent of women within VSLAs reported increased capability to do economic activities.**

"The entrepreneurial training has helped me to select the IGA I will be investing my money in immediately after share-out. I plan to invest [about \$107] in a pig business."

Akudoku Elizabeth, VSLA member

Overall, there was a 22.8% increase in women who had increased capabilities to do economic activities from a baseline of 3.8% to an endline of 26.6%.

Development of additional livelihoods. Following entrepreneurship trainings, **1,408 VSLA members (1,103 women) have established additional livelihoods**, primarily in food crop farming and livestock rearing (31%); setting up small grocery stores (28%); soap making (13%); and baking bread and pastries (11%). The total start-up capital was \$144,217 from VSLA group loans, **resulting in a cumulative monthly income of \$74,813, estimated annual income of \$897,756 and per capita of \$638/year, contributing to increased household income and a 7.9% reduction in the proportion of households living below the poverty line.** This was achieved through collective support from CARE, the Ministry of Agriculture, and

the Ghana Enterprises Agency's Business Advisory Center. According to VSLA member **Angela Mintah**, *"I always wanted to start a business to help support my four children. The hindrance has always been capital and technical know-how. Through the PROSPER project, I joined a VSLA, started saving and learned about making soap and baking. I took out a loan from my group to start a liquid soap business and today I'm realizing my long-held dream."*

Promoting livestock and poultry

production IGAs. Chickens and pigs are commonly reared in communities, but with low levels of production and often in inadequate conditions. CARE

collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture to train 288 people (120 women) on housing, feeding, vaccination, general care and management (for home consumption and scaling into sustainable livelihood enterprises). For startup, we provided 2,700 layer birds, 62 piglets and 41 grasscutters (also known as the greater cane rat). The piloting of piglets and grasscutters was done with 58 individual farmers (48 women) and seven VSLA groups with 202 members (140 women), practicing the "pass the gift to others" approach to members immediately after the animals give birth. A total of 237 VSLAs with a membership of 7,139 people (4,574 women) were engaged in the piloted 63 poultry farms, with 185 poultry management committee members (83 women) trained from 63 communities to provide technical support to the groups. The eggs from the poultry farms were subsidized for members to purchase as part of measures to also promote nutrition among the VSLAs. Overall, we had an 84% success rate with egg laying at 14 weeks and only a 1.8% mortality rate. **These communities sold 3,734 crates of eggs for a total revenue of \$11,202.** Moreover, 31 poultry management committee members have moved a step further by starting a poultry farmers society that targets farmers in the Cargill cocoa sourcing value chain. Their aim is to promote the poultry IGA among Cargill farmers and produce more eggs in the Western Region, which currently only contributes 3% of the egg supply in Ghana.



During the final evaluation, more than half of surveyed households reported being involved in poultry rearing, with an increase of 10.5% between baseline and endline. Consistent with the qualitative findings on increased livestock production, project households have increased poultry production and consumption largely because of their enhanced understanding of the benefits of consuming balanced meals. During a focus group, a participant revealed that *"CARE has really taught us a lot...I remember people used to tell me that [eating] chicken is bad for my health, but through CARE's training, I have realized that it is a nutritious meat, so, in my house we rear them."*

Gender dialogues. Thirteen project staff (three women) were trained on the Social Analysis and Action (SAA) approach. Through ongoing, critical self-reflection on gender, social and power norms, staff members increased their own understanding and skills for facilitating dialogue on gender.

During the last semester, PROSPER II held 144 gender dialogue sessions with 7,254 people (4,778 women), bringing the total to 366 gender dialogues with 14,065 people (9,218 women) in 157 communities. The sessions focused on addressing inequities in workload sharing and household decision-making among men and women, contributing to **53.7% of women reporting increased control of income at endline, compared to 32.8% at baseline, and 94.5% of women now able to equally participate in financial decision-making, compared to 91% at baseline.** The dialogues, done in collaboration with district gender officers, also have led to men taking up tasks previously only done by women in their respective communities, such as washing clothes, bathing children, sweeping and preparing meals for the entire household.

“My husband surprised me one morning when he bathed our two children for school. This has never happened before. He said he will be helping me with household chores and encouraged our sons to do the same. This, he said, was because of the gender dialogue conversations we had in the community where he realized I was overburdened with chores from dawn to dusk.”

Esther Azumah, VSLA member

Change Area 2: Access to productive resources (financial services and financial literacy).

Establishing VSLAs. The project, supported by 174 trained village agents (38 women), formed a total of 570 VSLAs in the 157 communities with 14,065 members (9,218 women). **These groups have a combined savings of \$751,779.30 and provided \$520,024.80 in loans to 7,208 members (4,829 women).** In addition, 81 VSLAs recently conducted share-outs totaling \$150,098. The loans and share-outs were used by members to support IGAs, medical expenses, school fees and home improvements. The introduction of VSLAs has inculcated the habit of saving among farmers that did not exist before while **improving access to financial services, leading to more than double the percentage of women who are active users of financial services, from 32.8% at baseline to 73% at endline.**

VSLA formation combined with continuous access to financial information contributed to a more than two-fold increase in women who are active users of financial services, from a baseline of 32.8% to 73% at endline.

VSLAs have given members the opportunity to accumulate money for the very first time in their lives, with some engaging in businesses that they couldn't before because of lack of startup capital. According to VSLA member **Akua Serwaa**, *“The VSLA program is my breakthrough. I took a loan of GHS 5,550 [around \$550] to establish a grocery store, and now my accumulation from the share out amounted to GHS 1,648 [around \$160] which will be used to purchase items for the store.”*

Financial literacy training for VSLA members. We incorporated financial literacy training into the VSLA module to equip members on how to use money to maximize profit and meet their needs, as well as build their confidence to engage service providers. Training topics included savings, borrowing, managing money, financial services, risk management, insurance and technology. Overall, we **trained 13,070 members (8,507 women) from 524 VSLAs in the 157 communities.** A five-day training-of-trainers financial literacy workshop was organized for 48 group promoters to build capacities of group promoters and VSLAs on financial literacy. This resulted in increased access to financial literacy

trainings for the VSLAs and enhanced the knowledge and capacities of the group promoter leads. According to a VSLA group chairperson **Kofi Armah**, *“These discussions are indeed an eye opener. We all now understand why we are saving and how to make the best use of it.”* As VSLAs mature, members are becoming motivated to take a loan to invest in a livelihood activity, make a profit and repay the loan.

Piloting the Chomoka App. Chomoka is a smartphone App that supports VSLAs by digitizing their group activities and improving the transparency and efficiency of the groups. Chomoka makes it easy for VSLAs to track their finances, improve recordkeeping, build a credit history and transition from informal to formal financial inclusion. As part of the rollout process, 13 project team members (three women) and 48 Chomoka agents/cluster leads (10 women) were trained on the Chomoka App to monitor savings and loan activities. Following the training, we onboarded 83 VSLAs in 36 communities onto Chomoka, helping 2,320 farmers (1,554 women) to digitize their activities. Feedback from the 83 VSLAs shows increased transparency in record keeping, easy tracking of group finances and reduced time spent at meetings. Each group’s secretary/record keeper was in charge of the Chomoka app. According to a VSLA group recordkeeper **Florence Gyido**, *“I sometimes had challenges calculating interest on members who want to take loans, but now Chomoka calculates it accurately for me. We haven’t had any errors since we started using it.”*

Change Area 3: Improving nutrition in cocoa-producing communities.

The PROSPER II project fostered improved nutritional behaviors of cocoa farming families by promoting food availability, access and usage through home gardens as well as through entrepreneurial trainings and activities so that families had more alternative income sources and ability to purchase nutritional food during the main cocoa season. Through the interventions, we contributed to increased **dietary diversity, from an average household dietary diversity score of 4.9 at baseline to 5.8 at endline (out of 10)**. Endline results also show a 13.5% rise in proportion of women (15-49) of reproductive age who consume a minimum adequate diet (at least five of the 10 food groups), from 60% to 73.5%. In addition, the mean dietary diversity score of children increased from 4.1 to 4.6, with the proportion of children who consume at least four out of seven micronutrient food groups increasing from 70% to 77.7%. There has been a 12.4% increase in the proportion of children (6-23 months) who consume a minimum acceptable diet, from 25.5% to 37.9%. **The proportion of children who meet the minimum acceptable diet at endline is 24.9% points higher than the national average (13%) (Ghana DHS, 2014)**. Lastly, the proportion of households who reported a change in nutrition behaviour increased significantly, from 30% at baseline to 63.2% at endline.

The proportion of women of reproductive age (15-49) who consume a minimum adequate diet (at least five of the 10 food groups) rose 13.5%, from 60% at baseline to 73.5% at endline.

Training on nutrition. Fourteen staff members (four women) were trained on nutrition using an adaptation of the CARE Farmer Field and Business School model and Growing the Future manual, in collaboration with the Ghana Health Service. In turn, 463 nutrition promoters (selected representatives from VSLA groups/269 women) from the 157 communities were trained and are now providing nutrition information to members of their VSLA groups, households and communities. These promoters were resourced with nutrition counseling cards developed by the project (A5-size cards – 5.8" x 8.3" – with photos of easily available commonly-eaten food items) to make their engagement simple, practical and participatory.

Nutrition sensitization. The 463 trained nutrition promoters reached 14,065 community members (9,218 women) with sensitization on the 10 food groups, complementary feeding of children between 6-23 months, and maternal nutrition for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, using locally available food as examples. Nutrition officers from the Ghana Health



Service also are using the nutrition counseling cards provided by the project. Through the nutrition sensitizations, 13,875 people made up of 9,088 women of reproductive age and 4,787 participating men were able to correctly cite five out of 10 defined food groups. Families are now eating more diverse meals and adding fruits, vegetables and nuts as part of their diets. For instance, the **consumption of vegetables by households is now 96.5% compared to 69.8% at the start of the project, while consumption of nuts and seeds increased from 37% at baseline to 58.8% at endline.** In addition, to create a **multiplier effect**, the project provided nutrition counseling cards to nine district health directorates as a resource to use in other communities. In turn, nutrition officers from the district health management teams conducted nutrition sensitizations in 63 non-project communities, reaching 5,160 people (4,386 women) during child welfare sessions at clinics, home visits and community outreach activities. **Overall, the Household Dietary Diversity Score increased by 0.9, from 4.9 at baseline to 5.8 at endline.** According to Fredrick Aseidu of the Sefwi Wiawso municipal nutrition office, *“I use the counseling cards for training sessions in non-CARE communities and as my main counseling material for mothers with children suffering from marasmus [severe malnutrition].”*

Home gardens. In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, the project promoted home vegetable gardens through trainings and demonstration on the use of containers/planters to increase access to nutritious food for VSLA households, for their family consumption and to sell surplus to other community members. Some of the vegetables grown were okra, cocoyam leaves, tomatoes and peppers. Overall, 13,142 VSLA members (8,007 women) established home gardens, **contributing to improved food security by reducing the proportion of households that ran out of food – from 71.3% to 45.8% – because of lack of money or other resources. The overall improvement in food security also can be referenced to the integrated nature of the project which allowed for increased access to additional income and nutritional food through homestead food production and other IGAs.**



According to **Betty Awuah** in Asempaneye community, *“I didn’t know I could grow all the food needed to give my family good nutrition until I was trained by CARE on home gardening. Today I grow all the vegetables we need in my backyard.”* And **Sarah Nyame** from Larwehkrom community says, *“My farm is*

far from home, and I must cross a big river to get vegetables. When it floods, I had to buy from the community. But now I have my own home garden, so I no longer have to buy from anyone. I can invest that money in more VSLA share purchases.”

The project contributed to improved food security, with the proportion of households that ran out of food because of lack of money or other resources decreasing from 71.3% to 45.8% between baseline and endline.

Cooking demonstrations. In addition to conducting nutrition sensitizations using counseling cards, the project executed community-wide cooking demonstrations with Ghana Health Service and Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Overall, **150 cooking demonstrations reached 13,875 people (9,157 women)**. The cooking demonstrations focused on using local ingredients from the home gardens to make fortified mashed yam as a complementary food for children between 6-23 months, and yam slices with vegetable stew as a four-star diet for women of reproductive age. Through these sensitizations, home gardens and demonstrations and other integrated factors promoting increased income, contributed to addressing the proportion of households that were unable to eat nutritious food due to lack of money or other resources which decreased from 87% to 62.5% between baseline and endline. Moreover, based on follow-up visits with 185 VSLAs, we observed that 74% of group members (3,422 people including 2,547 women) have adopted the recommended cooking practices. According to **Akua Kyeraa** of Fordjourkrom community, *“High blood pressure has been my challenge, but after participating in cooking demonstrations my eating habits changed. I now include a lot of green leafy vegetables in my diet and put a stop to spices. My doctor reduced my medication from twice to once a day due to the progress of my health.”*

Gender dialogues on social norms around nutrition. As people expressed interest to learn simple ways of cooking nutritious food, the project team harnessed that opportunity to engage them in addressing myths and misconceptions that negatively influence nutrition decisions, primarily putting women at risk. We facilitated 157 gender/nutrition dialogue sessions across all 570 VSLAs, reaching 14,065 people (9,218 women/4,847 men), to address and resolve common myths including:

- Pregnant women are not allowed to eat eggs and meat for fear of giving birth to criminals.
- Children should not be given eggs for fear of stealing in the future.
- The best part of every animal killed should be reserved for only men.
- A woman who has chickens is not allowed to kill one or take the eggs for a meal without the express consent of her husband.
- Mothers who practice exclusive breastfeeding have children that grow up to be weak and can't do any hard work.
- A woman who eats beans will have childbirth problems.
- A pregnant woman who eats ripe plantains gets contractions earlier than her due date.
- Men should not eat vegetables like okra as it can make them impotent.
- Bananas and okra are harmful to pregnant women and their unborn children.
- Women and children should only eat what the man of the house wishes to eat.

These are generational norms/myths passed on by traditional leaders and are not evidence-based. During discussions, it was extremely difficult for anyone to give reasons for adhering to these beliefs. After these dialogue sessions, participants, chiefs and elders/opinion leaders, along with nutrition promoters, agreed to a set of actions including leading more sensitization activities to put an end to these harmful nutritional norms in their communities. According to **Cecilia Minta** in Aboduum

community, *“Our children were left out when it comes to eating eggs and meat. We thought it was for the adult only but this training has enlightened me such that I now boil eggs for my children to take for school since it helps their growth.”*

Climate change adaptation. In collaboration with the District Department of Agriculture, CARE trained 175 community volunteers (38 women) on best practices for adapting to climate change. Best practices include crop diversification, planting drought-resistant crop varieties, preventing bush burning, promoting fruit tree production and integrating livestock with crop production. These volunteers then transferred their knowledge via training sessions they organized with all 570 VSLAs in the 157 communities. According to Ibrahim Tanko in Alhassankrom community, *“The training on climate change revealed to me that there are a lot of practices we have been doing that are very harmful. I have resolved to adapt the best practices learned to preserve the climate because it is a responsibility for us all.”*

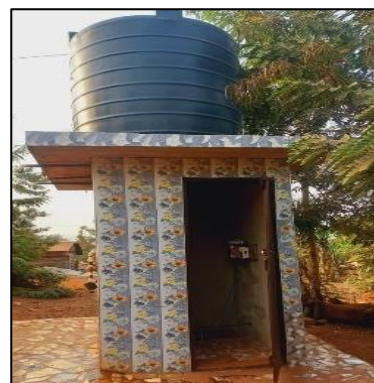
Change Area 4: Strengthening community governance and influencing policy and practices through strategic partnerships and advocacy.

Building gender sensitive community development structures. The project facilitated the establishment and training of gender inclusive community development committees (CDCs) in the 61 “new” communities with 721 members (230 women). CARE also reviewed the membership and built capacities of existing CDCs in existing 96 communities, leading to a total of 157 communities with gender-inclusive community-based structures with a total membership of 1,631 people (510 women). These CDCs developed community action plans (CAPs) to engage district, municipal assemblies and government agencies in improving local development and governance. CDCs also contributed to promoting women’s participation in leadership positions in their various communities. The project trained 14,065 people (9,218 women) in 157 communities on leadership and negotiation to promote women’s knowledge and confidence in taking up leadership roles. To date, the project has 269 women as nutrition promoters, 10 women as cluster leads, 83 women as poultry committee executives and nine women as Chomoka agents. Beyond the project structures, women are now more confident and encouraged to take up leadership positions in these communities, **with 60.5% of women in project households holding leadership positions in community groups or associations, compared to 27.1% at baseline.** According to **Sophia Alhassan** of Pitomu community, *“I always shied away from taking up leadership positions in my community. This is because I was made to believe only men should lead. After getting involved in CARE activities, I realized women could also become leaders in our community and became a cluster lead. This has led to a lot of women now stepping up to occupy leadership positions in my community whenever they come up.”*

Through the project’s gender approach, the percentage of women holding leadership positions in community groups or associations has increased more than two-fold, from 27.1% at baseline to 60.5% at endline.

Implementing community action plans (CAPs). The community-led planning approach and interface meetings between communities and district assemblies has strengthened community governance and influenced policies that affect cocoa-farming communities. Overall, there were 157 interface meetings held between 157 communities and district stakeholders such as planning officers, community development officers and social welfare officers. Such a platform provided community leaders an in-person opportunity to seek answers from government officers about delays in government projects and/or why they were never initiated. The project also strategically involved district and municipal assemblies when conducting community needs assessments in the 61 new communities, training CDC

members on resource mobilization, and in developing and monitoring their CAPs. The CAP development process resulted in the **61 communities identifying/prioritizing 184 community needs**. To date, these communities have completed 112 (or 61%) development projects, 14 (8%) are in progress, and 58 (31%) are still pending. Completed projects include the establishment of financial support groups; provision of skills training in additional livelihood options; bringing in resident teachers; construction of classrooms, computer labs and homes for teachers; provision of boreholes/potable water; reshaping roads; and building bridges. Key successes related to CDC efforts in CAP implementation include:



A completed community-initiated borehole in Sayerano community.

- The CDC in Panabo community led the mobilization of labor, water and food amounting to \$7,297 to support construction of a three-unit school that is sponsored by a parliament member after learning about their CAP.
- The CDC in Bonwire community mobilized \$1,351 to start construction of the six-unit teachers' quarters.
- The CDC in Ameyawkrom community mobilized \$608 to initiate the construction of a six-unit school.

Enable discussions between communities and district assemblies. Following trainings provided to CDCs on leadership, resource mobilization, conflict management and action plan development, they are now engaging with district authorities to lobby for support using their CAPs, which was not previously done. The training for CDCs focused on how to identify priority projects, how to budget and account for the execution of such projects, resource mobilization to undertake identified community projects, how to identify and reach out to the appropriate stakeholders for support in undertaking community projects as well as the management of completed community projects. This has contributed to enhanced skills in community planning and development in all 157 communities with abilities to develop and implement at least an action on their CAPs. **To date, the CDCs have mobilized \$47,619 in support of community-initiated projects.** Activities include the construction of boreholes, conversion of manual boreholes to mechanized, construction of school projects, provision of streetlights and refurbishment of market centers. **CDCs also secured 18 additional engagements with district assemblies/government agencies during the final year of the project,** as noted in the table below.

	Community	CAP project	Stakeholder contacted	Resources mobilized
1	Mpesetu	Child welfare health center	Ghana Health Service	The community mobilized \$130 in addition to labor.
2	Sorano Awaso	Nursery school block	Ghana Education Service and District Assembly	The community mobilized \$2,055 in addition to labor.
3	Ashiam	Nursery school block	Ghana Education service	The community mobilized \$4,126.
4	Chirano	Toilet facility	District Assembly	Supported by the District Assembly and community mobilization of \$1,600.
5	Lineso	Preschool structure	District Assembly	Community supported with \$200.
6	Pataboso	Borehole	District Assembly and National Petroleum Corporation	Community supported with \$400.
7	Bonwire	6-unit teachers' quarters	Member of Parliament	Community mobilized \$1,351.

8	Panabo	3-unit school	Member of Parliament	Community mobilized \$7,297 in labor, water supply and food.
9	Ameyawkrom	6-unit school	District Assembly	Community mobilized \$608.
10	Ohianpenika	6-unit school	Bia West District Planning Unit	2-acre plot of land procured by CDC for \$810.
11	Grushikrom	Road	Bia West Planning Unit	CDC raised \$318 to fuel an excavator to be provided by the district assembly.
12	Saygab	3-unit kindergarten	Akontombra District Chief Executive, Member of Parliament	CDC and PTA raised \$878 as seed money to support the construction.
13	Yamennae	Posting of trained teachers	Ghana Education Service – Bia West	CDC and PTA raised \$878 as seed money to start the construction
14	Mile 82	Roofing a 3-unit school	Ghana Education Service – Wiawso	CDC provided labor support equal to \$2,140.
15	Nyamempebone	3-unit kindergarten block	Ghana Education Service – Akontombra	CDC led the mobilization of \$1,000.
16	Kofikrom	5-bedroom nurses' quarters	Ghana Health service	CDC mobilized \$600 to start the construction.
17	Besibema	3-unit kindergarten block	Ghana Education Service – Akontombra	CDC secured \$300 through community levy.
18	Akaasu	Community information center	District Assembly	CDC mobilized \$300 from community to buy communication tools.

Update on PROSPER I CAP projects. Funds totaling \$96,494 were previously distributed to support 46 community-initiated projects in 45 communities. To date, 25 projects (54%) are fully completed; nine are close to completion (and at the stage where they have started being used for the intended purpose); and the remaining 12 are on-going, requiring additional funding to complete. Projects include the rehabilitation of computer labs (like the one pictured), community centers, kindergarten blocks, homes for nurses and mechanized water boreholes. Note that the increase in cost of items and economic slowdown have limited progress on some projects.



School construction. CARE completed the construction of six schools in PROSPER cocoa-farming communities (Fahiakobo, Lineso, Fordjourkrom, Juabo and Afofiekrom) in the Western region as well as in Adjeikojo in Tema (Greater Accra) close to Cargill's processing factory. These six communities are benefiting from school blocks ranging from kindergarten, primary and junior high school, providing approximately 700 children (357 girls) with access to education. The initiative aligns with U.N. Sustainable Development Goal 4 – Quality Education – to help ensure that no child is left behind. The schools have enough space for the children and are equipped with chairs and tables, toilets and handwashing facilities. The Ministry of Education will staff the schools and, with CARE and Cargill's support, ensure they are functional with blackboards, desks, chairs, and other necessary supplies. Formal handover/opening ceremonies are planned between October and November 2022. While construction was completed, unexpected repairs are being addressed to the Adjeikojo school ahead of handover. Below are photos of the six schools.



L to R: 6-unit classroom in Juabo and 3-unit classroom in Fordjourkrom.



L to R: 2-unit classroom at Fahiakobo and 6-unit classroom in Afofiekrom.



L to R: 2-unit classroom in Lineso and 6-unit classroom in Adjeikojo.

Project Adaptations

The COVID-19 pandemic and related mobility restrictions imposed by the government as safety and precautionary measures caused delays in implementing some field activities between mid-2020 to mid-2021. In response, the main project adaptations to COVID-19 centered around accelerating activities by building capacity/empowering 175 trained village agents/volunteers (38 women) to support VSLA expansion; 48 cluster leads (10 women) to support training activities for financial literacy and use of the Chomoka App; and 463 trained nutrition promoters (269 women) to conduct group sensitizations. All of these people are local, residing in the 157 communities.

Also note that a training-of-trainers on the Farmer Field and Business School (FFBS) approach was held for staff and stakeholders from July 25-29, 2022, with the learnings to be applied in the next phase of the project. The FFBS approach draws on the standard farmer field school participatory approach to improve agriculture productivity while also adapting to integrate key skills for market literacy, gender dialogues, nutrition and resilience for non-cocoa crops (i.e., food crops), and partnering with

government extension agents and other community-based extension agents to roll out training on those key topics.

Successes, Challenges and Lessons Learned

The main **success** was exceeding our overall target – achieving 120% – during a pandemic. Overall, we improved the financial, nutritional and socio-economic empowerment of 157 communities by creating 570 VSLAs with 14,065 members strong (9,218 women); training all VSLA members on leadership and negotiation skills as well as financial literacy and entrepreneurship; expanding investments in diversified livelihoods like food crop farming, livestock rearing and grocery stores to meet household and individual needs; creating and mentoring CDCs to lead community-initiated projects and collaborate with district authorities; establishing 13,142 home gardens and facilitating 150 cooking demonstrations to promote dietary diversification; holding 366 gender dialogue sessions to address inequities in workloads and household decision-making; and 157 nutrition dialogue sessions to address traditional myths around the foods that women and children can and cannot eat.

In terms of **challenges**, although digitizing the VSLA process has been successful and adopted in some project communities, other communities lack a communications network for Chomoka App functionality and backup. While the Chomoka App can be used offline, access to a communication network is needed to backup data of savings after each meeting. It is only after successful data backup that the meeting records can be monitored from the Chomoka system. The backup also ensures that data is not lost in the event a smart phone has a problem. This challenge was addressed by volunteers taking phones after VSLA meetings to a location where there is a communication network for backup. Another challenge was that heavy rains hindered some field activities as most VSLAs and CDCs sit under trees for their meetings and training sessions. Similarly, long distances between the 157 communities (and poor road conditions especially when it rains) affected the number of communities project staff members could reach and the level of direct engagement they could provide.

Regarding **lessons learned**, the engagement of trained group promoters provided a great opportunity to rapidly scale VSLAs and other project initiatives. Moreover, despite project efforts to influence behavior change there still exists negative cultural norms and practices that will take more time to resolve, particularly around proper nutrition for women and children, for which community members/leaders have committed to leading more sensitization activities to put an end to harmful nutritional norms as well as promoting shared workload and decision-making between men and women to foster positive change.

Human Interest Story

‘CARE and Cargill have empowered me to lead effectively’

Davidine, 32, is a cocoa farmer and single mother with four children between ages 2 and 13. “I started by joining a Cargill farmer group and became the lead farmer. Since then, I have been involved in the project in so many ways,” Davidine says. “I’m now the secretary of the community development committee, a VSLA member and community volunteer. I come from a community with chieftaincy issues and a low literacy rate. We aim to change that. From the experiences I’ve gained through CARE and Cargill trainings, I have been empowered with motivation and can-do spirit. Women can lead and be agents of change.”



Davidine received a loan from her VSLA to open a small medical supply shop and was recently trained as a Chomoka agent, to lead in supporting her VSLA colleagues on the use of the App. “Most women are afraid to take initiatives in my community because they would be tagged negatively as domineering and seen as disrespectful to men because they want to change the status quo,” Davidine says. “My vision is to continue promoting women empowerment through education and sensitization after the project ends.”

Conclusion

This report marks the completion of the three-year PROSPER II project in Ghana. In particular, the final year of the project centered around accelerating impact to make up lost time due to the pandemic, exceeding our overall target of 11,700 to 14,065 direct participants, and equipping them with the skills they need to lift themselves out of poverty. Individuals in VSLA groups have gone through financial literacy training, entrepreneurial training and IGA training and are now establishing sustainable businesses and improving the nutrition of their children. Communities, overall, also are taking up initiatives to rapidly increase their development through the construction of schools, water infrastructure, roads and bridges. Through PROSPER II, communities and stakeholders now view Cargill as a socially responsible company that respects and supports the well-being of cocoa-producing farmers and their communities. We thank Cargill for supporting this important, empowering and life transformational work.

Cargill Engagement (final year)

Date	Cargill Participants	CARE Participants	Meeting Objectives	Meeting Results
Aug. 25-26, 2021	Joshua Quansah	Eunice Oduro and Sebastian Korese	Brief district stakeholders on Cargill’s support in monitoring and addressing child labor in Juaboso and Bia West districts.	District stakeholders committed to addressing the issue of child labor in the communities.
Sept. 3, 2021	Charlotte Boadi	Mavis Yeboah and Barbara Sika	Review VSLA impact, at the Cargill processing plant in Tema.	Community women demonstrated how VSLAs and IGAs have impacted their lives.
Oct. 22, 2021	Samuel Apana and Charlotte Boadi	Martha Anima and Sarah Quartey	Exhibit and share some of our interventions on women’s economic empowerment with Cargill customers at the processing plant in Tema.	Cargill customers were impressed with IGA exhibitions on soap, liquid soap and pomade. Samples of the items were purchased by the customers, thus further increase the confidence of women participants.

Feb. 24, 2022	Samuel Apana, Enifah Dzimadzor and Joshua Quansah	Mercy Sika Krow and Eunice Oduro	Visually assess progress at schools and make recommendations for any improvements.	Agreed to install guardrails on stairs following joint visits.
June 15-16, 2022	Enifah Dzimadzor and Joshua Quansah	Eunice Oduro, Rebecca Agelle and Samuel Kusi Boakye	Assess the status of corrective actions and general work.	Schools deemed ready for handover in the first and second weeks of October 2022.
July 5, 2022	Joshua Quansah, Yahaya Zackaria and Olivier (Ferrero)	Eunice Oduro, Josephine Bonsu, Rebecca Agelle, Prince Konadu and Samuel Kusi Boakye	Visit communities to witness VSLAs, nutrition promotion, community-based agro forestry project, additional livelihood initiatives and community governance.	The Ferrero representative was excited about the IGAs and the VSLAs but importantly saw how Cargill and CARE work closely to ensure Cargill farmers benefit from development activities.

Stakeholder Engagement

Key stakeholders at the district and community levels have been engaged throughout the project from the inception meetings, project launch, needs assessment, community action planning, quarterly review meetings and overall implementation of project activities. The active engagement of the stakeholders has led to an understanding, ownership and sustainability of the interventions. Interface meetings held between the communities and duty bearers has led to strong partnerships and continuous support of community-initiated development projects with improved accountability and transparency. CARE, on a quarterly basis, has hosted 120 stakeholders from eight different municipal and district assemblies. The [Sefwi Akontombra district website](#) featured CARE and Cargill’s engagement at the close-out meeting with district stakeholders in July 2022.

For the implementation of activities, the project team always engaged all relevant stakeholders to achieve expected outcomes and overall goal. In particular CARE strengthened our collaboration with Ghana Health Service and Ministry of Agriculture at the district levels, which provided technical support for nutrition promotion, food crop production and home gardens. Engagements also were made with the Ghana Enterprices Agency (formerly called the Business Advisory Center) to support the training of VSLAs in additional livelihoods. The District Gender Office was engaged to support gender dialogues and creation of community gender action plans in all 157 communities. Moreover, district stakeholders and community members were involved at various levels during the commencement and building phases of school construction, and were engaged in the development of a sustainability plan for each community/district before any completed project is handed over. Overall, this project not only has provided stakeholders with the opportunity to get closely involved but also included a broader spectrum of community members, including women, to voice and decide on their development needs.

Côte D'Ivoire

Project Name:	PROSPER II – Supporting Cocoa-Farming Communities
Project Location:	23 Communities
Project Period:	Sept. 2019 – Aug. 2022
Reporting Period:	Final Report
Gift Amount:	\$1,583,084
CARE Contacts:	Dr. Maria Hinson Tobin



Executive Summary

The PROSPER II project in Côte d'Ivoire successfully scaled proven approaches to deliver economic and social empowerment across 23 cocoa-producing communities (10 from the previous phase and 13 new) and 130 nearby communities through additional training and replication of activities. During the past three years – and an ongoing COVID-19 pandemic – we achieved the following topline results.

- Established 306 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) with 7,896 members (5,436 women). These groups saved \$748,183 and provided \$345,883 in loans to members. Moreover, 101 VSLAs with 2,275 members (1,820 women) were networked. **As a result, 69% of women are now active users of financial services, compared to 31% at baseline.**
- Linked 161 VSLAs (135 from PROSPER/26 from previous PROCOCO project) with 4,347 members (3,260 women) to Advans microfinance institution, with \$25,781 in savings and \$23,357 provided in loans.
- Created 395 income-generating activities (30 poultry, 262 food crops and 103 off-farm), generating \$145,589 over the past 18-24 months. **As a result, per capita income increased by 53%, from an annual average of \$663 to \$1,015. As a result, participants can invest more in IGAs as well as send their children to school. Households also were lifted out of poverty through the project's livelihood activities, with the proportion of households living below the national poverty line (737 CFA/day) decreasing substantially, from 61.6% at baseline to 3.5% at endline.**
- Greater incomes also supported better food security, with **65% of respondents reporting they were not worried about running out of food in the past 12 months, compared to 28% at baseline. Furthermore, the severity of food insecurity decreased, with the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity decreasing from 67% at baseline to 23.6% at endline.**
- Trained/reinforced the leadership skills of 813 VSLA members (568 women) in 23 communities. As a result, **81% of women now hold leadership positions in their community groups or associations, compared to 27% at baseline.**
- Organized 33 gender committees (165 members including 66 women), which held 880 couples dialogue sessions with 3,279 participants (1,981 women) including 2,830 VSLA members (1,660

women). As a result, household gender norms and dynamics changed. By endline, 98% of the women surveyed stated that they contribute to household expenses. Furthermore, **65% of women now report they equally participate in household financial decision-making, an increase from 25% at baseline.**

- Trained 50 literacy facilitators (eight women) and opened 50 new literacy centers (Levels 1, 2 and 3), reaching 750 adult learners (510 women).
- Reached 8,572 people directly (5,757 women) and 55,718 indirectly (37,421 women) with nutrition promotion, with support from 124 nutrition promoters/members of VSLAs (81 women). Our reach during the final year scaled nearly four-fold as a result of sensitizing new VSLAs and taking advantage of VSLA meetings to deliver nutrition messages using food cards. **This has led to participants making healthier food choices, with 97% of respondents reporting a change in nutrition behavior, compared to 45% at baseline. There was improved dietary diversity for women, with the percentage of women consuming a minimum acceptable diet (five of the 10 defined food groups) increasing from 20.2% at baseline to 95% at endline.**
- Supported the construction of 627 improved toilets and 273 traditional drying racks for kitchen utensils, reaching 4,703 people (2,304 women). The construction of improved toilets reduced the harmful practice of open defecation.
- Organized 23 community development committees (CDCs) with 345 people (92 women), 23 WASH committees with 115 people (46 women) and 23 child protection committees with 253 people (69 women). We also sensitized 164 people (109 women) and eight leaders (two women) from three communities on combating child labor. **As a result, 99% of respondents said they washed their hands before eating, preparing food and using the toilet. And 75% affirmed they used training skills acquired to combat child labor while 92% affirmed they had seen a change in their communities since training in support of rules and enrollment of out-of-school children.**
- Constructed seven schools (with latrines and handwashing stations); installed 13 water pumps; constructed two maternity hospitals with solar power and one midwife's house; and procured and delivered an ambulance to N'denou locality to help meet emergency health needs. These were done with additional funding and support provided to PROSPER by Cargill, Pasquier, Hershey and Global Water Challenge.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- Per capita income increased by 53%, from an annual average of \$663 to \$1,015. As a result, participants can invest more in IGAs as well as send their children to school.
- The proportion of households living below the national poverty line fell from 61.6% at baseline to 3.5% at endline.
- The percentage of respondents *not* worried about running out of food in the last 12 months, more than doubled from 28% at baseline to 65% at endline.
- The percentage of women consuming a minimum acceptable diet (five of the 10 defined food groups) increased from 20.2% at baseline to 95% at endline.
- The percentage of women in leadership positions in their communities tripled, from 27% at baseline to 81% at endline.
- The percentage of women who can equally participate in household financial decision-making increased over two-fold, from 25% at baseline to 65% at endline.

COVID-19 Context

Côte d'Ivoire has recorded 87,282 confirmed COVID-19 cases with 826 deaths since March 2020. To date, 33% of the 26 million people in the country have been fully vaccinated. Since COVID started, the

government has imposed movement restrictions, curfews and social distancing as well as promoted handwashing with soap. Moreover, the Ministry of Health intensified mass sensitization of early detection of COVID-19, supporting rapid antigen testing during large gatherings and strengthening the vaccine stock and supply process.

Faced with this pandemic and vaccine hesitancy, CARE adjusted our work plan to meet the health needs of communities, including training community relays (volunteers) to conduct COVID-19 prevention and vaccination awareness sessions in project areas. We also worked with communities to set up 1,000 traditional tippy tap handwashing stations, reaching 7,500 people (3,675 women). CARE also assessed the functionality of 19 water points provided as part of our COVID-19 response in 17 communities (two of the communities have two water points). We found that those water points worked properly, allowing approximately 20,000 people (9,800 women) to have access to clean water thereby improving household and community health and hygiene status. At the same time, CARE has worked with partners like Pasquier, Global Water Challenge and Bayer to establish 13 new water points.

Project Achievements

Since the start of PROSPER II in September 2019, **CARE has reached 8,572 people directly (5,757 women) and 55,718 people indirectly (37,421 women)**. This exceeded our target of 7,700 people directly (6,200 women) and 46,500 indirectly (32,550 women). **The project's reach represents 118% of our overall target (direct and indirect), after three years of implementation.** Our reach included 306 VSLAs with 7,896 members (5,436 women), 23 community development committees (CDCs), 23 WASH committees, 23 child protection committees and 33 gender committees, completing the establishment of those committees in each community. Note that of the 33 gender committees, 10 additional ones were formed in localities with higher numbers of VSLA members.

KPI	Direct Reach	Direct Reach (Women)	Direct Reach (Men)	Indirect Reach	Indirect Reach (Women)	Indirect Reach (Men)	Total Direct & Indirect Reach (Women)	Total Direct & Indirect Reach
# beneficiaries reached	8,572	5,757	2,815	55,718	37,421	18,297	43,178	64,290
# farmers reached	6,996	4,653	2,343	45,474	30,245	15,230	34,898	52,470
# beneficiaries reached with nutrition interventions	8,572	5,757	2,815	55,718	37,421	18,297	43,178	64,290

KPI	Total	Women	Men
# farmers part of Cargill's supply chain and receiving technical assistance*	6,996	4,653	2,343

*Cargill and CARE initiated a Smallholder Farming pilot project to promote climate-friendly and income-generating agriculture for households. The pilot involves 12 VSLAs, including six from PROSPER with 153 members (111 women). We will continue to link more VSLA members to agro-dealers in the next phase. **All 6,996 farmers received inputs from Semivoire, the seed distributor.**

KPI*	Total
# VSLAs or other saving groups established	306
# CDCs established	23
# Child Protection Committees established	23

# WASH Committees established	23
# Gender Committees established	33

* The report narrative below includes number of members disaggregated by sex and other relevant data.

Change Area 1: Women's empowerment.

Establishing VSLAs. Through VSLAs, women save money, access credit, and build social and economic solidarity. VSLAs also serve as a platform for discussions on education, nutrition and other family matters. During the project, **CARE created 306 VSLAs with 7,896 members (5,436 women) who saved a total of \$748,183 and provided \$345,883 in loans to support 395 income-generating opportunities** (30 poultry, 262 food crops and 103 off-farm opportunities) outside of cocoa activities, far exceeding the target of creating 100 VSLAs. A key success has been the resiliency demonstrated by VSLA groups during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the support provided by the project in the framework of IGAs has enabled VSLA members to have a regular income, enabling them to meet their daily household needs (food, health, education of children) during the pandemic. At the end of the project, 93% of 402 households surveyed had increased incomes. **Average per-capita incomes increased by 53% between baseline and endline. Moreover, 92% of women now have access to financial services and 69% of women are active users, a significant increase from 31% at baseline.**

Organizing and following up with gender committees. Gender committees play an important role in community activities in rural areas. They promote gender equality to contribute to the reduction of disparities and violence; they encourage women to participate in decision-making in households and in resolving community issues; they provide conflict resolution support in households; and they encourage spouses to participate in couples dialogue sessions. Gender committees also have brought about changes in decision-making for food consumption and cash crops. During the project, we **organized 33 gender committees with 165 members (66 women)** who have been trained on their roles and responsibilities; all gender committees have developed action plans. Of the 33 gender committees, 10 were formed in localities with higher numbers of VSLA members. **As a result, 65% of women now participate in household financial decision-making, an increase from 25% at baseline.** Further monitoring of gender committee activities showed improvement in communication in 90% of couples and progress in men's participation in domestic/household tasks (60% of men involved compared to 30% at baseline).

Conducting couples dialogue sessions. We trained six senior gender committee group promoters (one woman) to conduct couples dialogue sessions as a tool for changing behaviors of men towards women, strengthening communication, managing household income/expenses better, and making decisions more equitable. During the project, **gender committees held 880 couples dialogue sessions with 3,279 participants (1,981 women), including 2,830 VSLA members (1,660 women).** The participants in these sessions – mainly VSLA/cocoa-producing households – came out more confident in responding to various challenges they encounter. Men are increasingly involved in taking on more household tasks to reduce the workload on women. At the end of the project, 97% of households reported a change in behavior on the part of their spouses since attending couples dialogue sessions including jointly deciding on the schooling of their children, compared to 45% at baseline.

Training on leadership. Based on first-hand accounts we know that women are underrepresented in both formal and informal decision-making bodies. Thus, they cannot effectively contribute to changing norms, laws and policies that are limiting factors to their empowerment. In this context, **CARE organized leadership training with 813 people (568 women) in the 23 PROSPER II communities** to help them acquire life-changing skills so they can become more resilient. Key results included the women of

Taabo department coming together to oversee the renovation of the facade (front) of the hospital and the department authority awarding a woman VSLA member for her proactive leadership and commitment to fostering women’s empowerment. Through this leadership, they also have organized to facilitate the flow of food production from Taabo to Abidjan. **By endline, the percentage of women in leadership positions in their communities tripled, from 27% at baseline to 81% at endline.**



Training on literacy. Improving literacy and basic numeracy is essential for the social and economic empowerment of people, particularly women. During PROSPER II we trained 50 literacy facilitators (eight women) and opened 50 literacy centers for adults.

Literacy facilitators are mostly men because the literacy rate is so low for women and there is a

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
# Centers	15	18	17	50
# Learners	225 (150 women)	270 (180 women)	255 (170 women)	750 (510 women)

lack of women to fill this role at present. This initiative was made possible through a partnership with the Directorate of Literacy and Non-formal Education, which also provided inspectors/counselors to monitor the literacy centers. There were 750 Level 1 learners (510 women), 495 Level 2 learners (150 women) and 255 Level 3 learners (170 women). Level 1 is equivalent to a preparatory course; Level 2 is equivalent to elementary school; and Level 3 is equivalent to middle school. We provided these learners with a kit that differed slightly by level but, in general, included a box of chalk, a notebook, a slate writing board, syllabus, math booklet and pencil. **Through literacy activities, 57% of participating women can now read and write, compared to 43% at baseline.** They report an increase in their income because literacy classes have enabled them to better manage their income-generating activities (i.e., record their expenses so they can see profits/losses). At the end of this phase of the project, the literacy centers were handed over to the government to ensure sustainability.

Introducing Chomoka. Chomoka is a smartphone-supported tool that supports savings groups by digitizing their group activities and improving the transparency and efficiency of the groups. Chomoka allows groups to track their finances, improve recordkeeping, build a credit history and transition from informal to formal financial inclusion. During PROSPER II, 10 members of the project team (four women) and seven VSLA group promoters (two women) were trained on the Chomoka App to monitor savings and loan activities. Afterwards, we introduced the Chomoka App to 10 VSLAs groups with 267 members (176 women) who saved \$10,326 and provided \$9,286 in loans through the App. These VSLAs were selected based on their maturity (more than two years of operation and good performance). However, difficulties such as the network coverage in rural communities and the illiteracy of some members limited the scope of the application. Moving forward, in the next phase, we will work to address such challenges (e.g., establishing internet hotspots) so that participants can take better advantage of Chomoka.

Change Area 2 & 3: Access to productive resources & Inclusive markets.

Supporting income-generating activities (IGAs): CARE uses the *She Feeds the World* approach to enable women and young producers to access and control productive assets and resources as a means of promoting IGAs in addition to cocoa production.

The initiatives of the PROSPER II project have focused on food crop/garden production, transportation, fish factories, poultry and processing cassava into its derivatives (i.e., for traditional recipes like placali and attiéké). **We contributed to the establishment of 395 IGAs (30 poultry, 262 food crops and 103 off-farm opportunities)** with 6,996 people (4,653 women), generating \$145,589 to increase their household income. A great proportion of women now report increased capability to perform economic activity, from 31% at baseline to 73% at endline.



The project's integrated approach **led to a 53% increase in average per capita income and greater food security, with 65% of respondents reporting they were not worried about running out of food in the past 12 months, compared to 28% at baseline. Households also were lifted out of poverty through the project's livelihood activities, with the proportion of households living below the national poverty line decreasing by 58.1 percentage points, from 61.6% at baseline.**

The project also **improved access to agricultural inputs.** At the start of the project, 57% said that access to agricultural inputs was difficult. But by endline, 88% stated that access to inputs is much easier.

- Under **food crop/market gardening production**, 262 VSLAs with 6,996 members (4,653 women) were involved during the project. This included 98 VSLAs with 2,398 members including 1,709 women in PROSPER I and 164 VSLAs with 4,598 members including 2,944 women in PROSPER II, on 65 hectares of demonstration/collective plots. On these plots they mostly grew eggplant, peppers, okra, maize, cabbage, tomatoes, squash, rice and cassava. To date, these IGAs have generated \$30,750 in total income (approximately \$65 per capita for agricultural activities). On average, producers sell two-thirds and keep a third for household consumption. All members collaborate with food/vegetable crop promoters, have been trained on climate-smart agriculture practices by CARE staff and are now applying their learnings on their own individual plots (0.125 hectares on average per member). Moreover, **85% of farmers have adopted at least three new agricultural technologies/practices like using biopesticides, compost fertilizer and doing manual weeding instead of slash and burn.**
- For **poultry production**, the project supported the establishment of 30 poultry farms with 505 people (314 women), earning \$70,295 (\$139 per capita). Of the 30 poultry farms, 23 collectives have 6,724 chicks and seven individuals (two women) have 4,850 chicks, for a total of 11,574. Project data suggests that individual poultry IGAs are significantly more profitable than collective poultry farming.

Poultry production	To date	
	Individual	Collective
# Farms	7	23
# Chicks	4,850	6,724
# Participants	7 people (2 women)	498 people (312 women)
Income (ongoing)	\$34,912	\$35,383

- For **off-farm opportunities**, we supported several initiatives to diversify the income of cocoa-producing families. These included 39 cassava processing, transportation of food and other items, sale of frozen items and a hairdressing salon. These IGAs were primarily established through loans received from their VSLAs. Cassava processing engaged 1,053 people (734 women) through 39 IGAs, generating \$10,675 over 31 months. Transportation of goods using tricycles was done by seven VSLAs with 175 members (114 women), earning an extra income of \$4,800 over 21 months of operation. The hairdressing salon was started by one VSLA woman, generating \$2,464 over 21 months. And the sale of frozen items like fish (via freezers) involved two VSLAs with 60 members (45 women), generating \$1,619 over 21 months. Also, 54 people (47 women) established individual IGAs through loans received from their VSLAs, earning \$70,502 in total income (\$1,305 per capita). These IGAs include the sale of clothes, juices, cakes and sewing handicrafts. **Through all off-farm IGAs in this phase of the project, the income generated is \$90,060.** Beyond the added income, collective activities like processing cassava, for example, has given people the skills for good management and opportunity to work together for the first time, thus strengthening cohesion in the community.

Type of IGA	To date	
Cassava processing (collective)	# Cassava processing	39 IGAs
	Membership	1,053 people (734 women)
	Income (ongoing)	\$10,675 over 31 months
Tricycle transport activities (collective)	# Tricycles	7 IGAs
	Membership	175 people (114 women)
	Income (ongoing)	\$4,800 over 21 months
Hairdressing salon (individual)	# Hairdressing salons	1 IGA
	Membership	1 woman
	Income (ongoing)	\$2,464 over 21 months
Sale of frozen fish (collective)	# Freezers	2 IGA
	Membership	60 people (45 women)
	Income (ongoing)	\$1,619 over 21 months

Linking VSLAs to a microfinance institution. CARE partnered with the microfinance institution Advans to enable VSLA members to access a full range of needs-based financial services (savings, credit, insurance, etc.) and the financial education that accompanies them. We **linked 161 VSLAs (135 PROSPER and 26 PROCOCO) with 4,347 members (3,260 women) to Advans, with \$25,781 saved and \$23,357 received in loans.** CARE and Advans will continue to provide more orientation/sensitization sessions for VSLAs on a regular basis to help them better understand all the workings of formal financial services, reassure hesitant members, and foster more linkages. In addition, during the final months of the project, four women VSLA leaders from the Taabo area approached the COOPEC microfinance institution to present the VSLA approach and access funds from the Côte d'Ivoire Women's Support Fund managed by the office of the First Lady. This opportunity to further diversity financial partners resulted in 37 women each receiving \$769 (a total of \$28,453).

Establishing VSLA networks. The network approach brings a real added value to VSLAs by promoting exchanges among groups, increased negotiation power, increased ability to implement joint IGAs, and increased training opportunities for members in education, nutrition, health, sanitation, etc. The approach also allows for federation control of member groups as well as their expanded participation in civil society through the creation of local, regional and national women's association movements. To

date, we have **networked 101 VSLAs with 2,275 members (1,820 women)**. In Taabo, for example, the network has mobilized approximately 2,000 women who share their experiences regarding their IGAs as well as support the most vulnerable people in their communities, including providing in-kind gifts to the hospital. **In addition, a space has been set up by the women of the network to facilitate the marketing of food products from Taabo to other areas including Abidjan.** This platform provides an opportunity for them to collectively negotiate better prices. We plan to duplicate this in the next phase in areas where marketing of agricultural production is difficult.

Link VSLAs to Cargill’s supply chain (pilot project with two PROSPER communities). CARE and Cargill initiated the *Smallholder Farming* pilot project in Sahoua and Félixkro communities with six PROSPER VSLAs that have 153 members including 111 women. The pilot project aims to empower women and increase their income through a food and vegetable value chain. This includes linking them to suppliers of inputs (seeds, bio-fertilizer, irrigation equipment, etc.), to technical support services (agro-coaching) and to buyers of agricultural products. These VSLA members initially cultivated 3.125 hectares with okra, chili pepper, bell pepper, purple onion, purple cabbage, squash, and tomatoes. For the first cycle, the groups recently harvested 1,322 kilograms of corn (or 6,608 ears) of which 122 kg (608 ears) were just sold for \$561 with the rest still to be sold. We expect profits from the second cycle to exceed \$650. Note that this pilot supports 12 VSLAs in total (six for PROSPER, two for USAID and four for CSI) and activities started in March 2022 following the acquisition of irrigation equipment. Note that according to CARE’s procedures, open bids at the national level take at least three months, which, as a result, has caused some delay.

Monitoring construction of infrastructure. PROSPER II contributed to improved living conditions of cocoa producing households through access to drinking water, education and health services. We constructed eight schools (with latrines and handwashing stations) and one teacher’s house; installed 13 water pumps; constructed two

Infrastructure	Planned	Achieved	Remaining
Hydraulic water pumps	27	13	14
Schools and teachers house	9 (8 schools/1 teachers house)	8 (7 schools/1 teachers house)	1 school
Clinics with maternity accommodation or ambulance	3	3 (two maternity hospitals, one midwife’s house and one ambulance)	0
Total	39	24	15

maternity hospitals and one midwife’s house with solar power; and provided an ambulance to N’denou locality to help meet emergency health needs, including maternal health. These activities benefited at least 16,000 people (7,840 women), and was done with support from Cargill, Hershey, Pasquier and Global Water Challenge. All infrastructure work was done in collaboration with CDCs and partner cooperatives to ensure sustainability. In addition, through the CARE-Bayer partnership, construction is underway for five water boreholes with mini solar power pumps. Note that the remaining 15 infrastructures (*from table*) will need approximately \$381,000 in financial support for completion.

Change Area 4: Nutrition.

Nutrition sensitization. To improve nutritional practices in cocoa-producing communities, CARE collaborated with the National Nutrition Program (NNP), a government body that oversees the reduction of malnutrition and healthy growth of children. Through VSLAs and CDCs, CARE promoted exclusive breastfeeding for children under 6 months and a diversified diet for children and mothers through animal protein, legumes, staple foods, cereals and vegetables, especially green leafy vegetables and those rich in vitamin A. We also empowered communities to take ownership of nutrition

activities and screening for malnutrition. Nutrition awareness sessions were developed for VSLA groups, to coincide with their weekly meetings. During the project, these **nutrition sessions reached 8,572 people (5,757 women) directly and 55,718 people (37,421 women) indirectly. This led to improved dietary diversity for women, with 95% of women (15-49 years) reporting consumption of at least five out of 10 defined food groups at endline, up from 20.2% at baseline.** As a result, there was a slight increase in the average household dietary diversity score (HDDS) from 5.22 at baseline to 5.25 at endline.



For hygiene practices, 99% of respondents reported wash their hands before eating, before preparing food and after using the toilet, compared to 50% at baseline. Also, 97% of households reported a change in nutrition behavior, for example the regular consumption of fruits, compared to 45% at baseline.

Training more nutrition facilitators on the NNP approach. The NNP program supported the project’s nutrition activities by helping train 19 health workers including four women (doctors, nurses and community health workers) on the malnutrition referral system and monitoring the healthy growth of children under age 5 and pre- and postnatal visits for pregnant and breastfeeding women. Nutrition

facilitators (124 members of VSLAs including 81 women) also were trained to work with health workers to screen all children under age 5 and pregnant and breastfeeding women for malnutrition in their communities, as well as conduct cooking demonstrations on preparing infant porridges and purees from local foods.

Because of nutrition-related activities promoted by the project over the past three years, there have been no registered cases of malnutrition in the health centers.

Building on this success and to extend nutrition activities to new VSLAs, we trained 47 more nutrition facilitators (10 women) in the final year of the project, who work in 18 participating communities and 21 nearby satellite communities, reaching 6,750 additional people (5,400 women) from non-project communities.



Building more toilets and drying racks. To contribute to improving living conditions of cocoa producing households and reducing water-related illnesses in communities, CARE has integrated a WASH approach into the project. We supported 23 WASH committees in implementing their WASH plans. This included the **construction of 627 improved toilets and 273 drying racks for kitchen utensils, benefiting 4,703 people (2,304 women).** This has contributed to creating a safe environment by reducing open defecation and increasing good hygiene practices. Moreover, as pictured, VSLA members are taking pride in helping keep their communities clean.

Change Area 5: Social protection.

COVID-19 Response. During the project, the COVID-19 pandemic started and there also were spikes observed due to new variants. To reduce the spread of COVID-19 in project communities, activities were

carried out in compliance with prevention measures including social distancing and handwashing. CARE also worked with the 23 WASH committees to conduct community sensitizations and support the construction of 1,000 traditional tippy tap handwashing stations. **Overall, the project's COVID-19 sensitization/prevention efforts have benefited 63,254 people (42,564 women).**



Supporting child protection committees' activities. In partnership with the Ministry of Women, Family and Children's Affairs, we **established 23 child protection committees with 230 members (69 women).** The role of these committees is to raise awareness on children's rights and child protection issues in cocoa-producing communities. "Children" are defined as under age 18. Moreover, during the final year of the project, 164 people (109 women) from three communities took part in child protection sessions and eight community leaders (two women) learned about combating child labor. These child protection committees are now taking action in collaboration/ongoing consultation with Ministry agents. For example, the committee in Kotiessou referred four children (one girl) suffering from Buruli ulcers (a chronic debilitating disease caused by bacteria that affects skin and bone often causing tuberculosis and leprosy) for treatment at the hospital. Without the committee in place, the intervention likely would not have happened. In addition, CARE **delivered 1,080 school kits to children of cocoa producer households and secured 163 birth certificates,** in collaboration with child protection committees. Birth certificates are essential to enroll children in schools, without them, children are unable to attend. Each school kit contains a 32-page notebook, a reading book, a math book, a drawing book, book covers, a writing slate, pencil, blue pen, red pen, green pen, eraser, and Cargill-CARE branded backpack.



The final evaluation found that 75% of respondents affirmed they had used the skills from training/awareness received to help eradicate child labor and 92% have noticed a change in their community regarding enrollment of children who had dropped out of school (i.e., this was self-reported as we don't have actual enrollment rates at present). In addition, 82% of people surveyed have children who benefited from birth certificates and/or school kits. Moving forward, child protection committees are planning their activities for the coming year, including stepping up awareness raising among VSLAs as well as linking older out-of-school children to master craftsmen (mechanics, carpentry, plumbing, etc.) so they can benefit from quality training/vocational mentoring.

Change Area 6: Strategic partnerships and influencing policy and practice through advocacy.

As previously mentioned in this report, CARE has partnered with Cargill to implement a *Smallholder Farming* pilot project in Felixkro and Sahoua communities, with the participation of six PROSPER VSLAs with 153 members including 111 women. This value chain initiative was launched in March 2022 to facilitate the acquisition of quality inputs, create a network for safe marketing, and increase the income of participating farmer households. Based on the success of the pilot, we could extend it to other

localities that have a nearby water source and available arable land. Similarly, the project initiated a partnership with Callivoire (an agricultural technical assistance company) and strengthened actions with OCPV (Food Products Marketing Assistance Office) to facilitate the acquisition of quality inputs and a secure and profitable market for agricultural products. Participating VSLA groups already have started mobilizing. In Taabo, for example, members organized an event to share their experiences working on different IGAs. During the event, a woman VSLA leader advocated to local authorities and department executives to support their work, including helping identify potential markets for the sale of their production. Advocacy actions for the formalization of VSLAs have been carried out. Today, these VSLAs are recognized by local authorities resulting in members being able to take out loans.

Project Adaptations

As noted in past reports, the pandemic affected the implementation schedule of the PROSPER project, primarily between March and December 2020. During that time, the Ivorian government took certain measures in response to the pandemic, including the quarantine of the greater Abidjan area and the closure of land, air and sea borders. Those restrictions caused the project team to reduce and, at one point, even stop going to rural areas. CARE put in place a digitized mechanism so we could continue monitoring activities and achieve the expected results. Field supervisors based in rural areas were in regular telephone or virtual contact with community facilitators to monitor activities and transmit data. The activities delayed by the health crisis were rescheduled when mobility restrictions were eventually lifted at the end of 2020/beginning of 2021. Since then, we were able to get all project activities back on track and implemented in compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures, including discussing COVID-19 prevention messages and vaccination at the beginning of all VSLA meetings. Farmer Field and Business School trainings were conducted toward the end of the project (and will continue in the next phase), with the aim of improving nutrition, gender equity, marketing, monitoring and making communities more resilient to climate change and increased market costs.

Successes and Challenges

Despite the COVID-19 situation, the key **successes** were organizing 306 VSLAs with 7,896 members (5,436 women); networking 101 VSLAs; linking 161 VSLAs to Advans; and establishing 395 IGAs that generated \$145,589 to increase household incomes. Moreover, another key success was the expansion of nutrition activities in the final year, reaching 64,290 people (43,178 women), as well as changing mindsets in households and communities to foster women's social and economic empowerment.

Beyond these successes, the main **challenge** has been determining a reliable market channel for agricultural products as more VSLAs are getting involved in agriculture. For example, for those who produce cassava and attiéké (a side dish made from cassava), we need to continue supporting their collectives to identify markets (including exporters) that they can deliver/sell their product to throughout the year in order to reduce post-harvest losses and guarantee producers a better income.

Human Interest Stories

'I Take Part in All Household Decisions'

N'dri Affoue Thérèse, 47, is married, a mother of seven children and member of a VSLA group. "Before the start of gender activities like couples dialogues, my husband didn't involve me in *any* decisions at home or give me any information on our income and expenses," N'dri says. "Today, when there's a harvest, we discuss the production and amount of sale. He asks my opinion on how we should spend the money. I tell him that we have to save some for our future and some to take care of



the household and our children’s education. From now on, I take part in all household decisions. I also contribute to our household income through the sale of the vegetables I produce and after VSLA end of cycle share outs. Thanks to CARE and Cargill, I am now a happy woman who contributes to our household and community.”

‘There is more joy in giving than in receiving’

Micheline Ekré is a single mother of two children and secretary of her VSLA group and Taabo women’s network. “Before the arrival of CARE, there was no solidarity between us,” she says. “We did not see each other and we all faced our problems alone. Today, thanks the creation of VSLAs, which allowed us to develop our social and economic potential, and reinforced our self-esteem, we have made friends. We organize community cleanups. We help each other and have created a chain of solidarity within our communities. This is the value that the project has instilled in us that we want to pass on to others. We thank CARE and Cargill for showing us the way of mutual aid and solidarity.”



Conclusion

Despite the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19 since March 2020, the project has adapted to reach 64,290 people (43,178 women) directly and indirectly – representing 118% of our overall target. On behalf of families benefiting from VSLAs, IGAs, nutrition activities, schools, improved toilets and COVID prevention measures, we thank Cargill for supporting this important and lifechanging work.

Cargill Engagement (Final Year)

Date	Cargill Participants	CARE Participants	Meeting Objectives	Meeting Results
Feb. 2022	Silue Gninaguignon	Koffi Amadou	Validation of needs for the realization of infrastructures.	Five action plans approved by cooperatives (ETC, CPB, CPSL, COASI and SOCABB).
Dec. 2021	Silue Gninaguignon (and Rita Adopo from Bayer along with agrodealers)	Flora Oualogo, Marius Kone and Arsene Massa	Review plans for the Smallholder Farmers pilot project in two communities.	Discussed responsibilities for each partner and programming of field activities, which started March 2022.

Central America

Project Name:	PROSPER II - Nourishing the Future
Project Location:	Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua
Project Period:	September 2019 – August 2022
Reporting Period:	Final Report
Gift Amount:	\$3,379,713
CARE Contacts:	Dr. Maria Hinson Tobin



Executive Summary

Over the past three years of PROSPER II, people in Central America faced humanitarian impacts that put their lives, rights and access to services at risk. For the most part, since 2020, the region has remained in a state of red alert with containment measures (i.e., restrictions for mobility and in-person field activities) due to spikes in COVID-19 cases from different waves and variants. With services disrupted and livelihoods devastated, families are finding it harder to put healthy food on the table.

Microenterprises suffered the greatest impact from COVID-19 due to mobility/transport restrictions that did not allow the continuation of sales activities, dramatically reducing income as a result. In addition, climatic shocks such as drought and floods (including two hurricanes, Eta and Iota, in November 2020) have negatively impacted agriculture and tilapia production, further exacerbating pre-existing levels of food and nutritional insecurity. Vulnerable people also have been forced to move by the global food security crisis that has been made worse by spiraling inflation and shortages of grain and fertilizer linked to the war in Ukraine. There has been a 92% increase in the cost of fertilizer and 40% increase for fuel, resulting in the reduction of planting areas, lower volume of production and reduced income in households of small producers. According to the Pan American Health Organization, the prevalence of hunger in the region is the highest it has been in the last 15 years. The World Food Programme noted a 51% reduction in employment across the region.

For these reasons, economic growth has shown great limitations. The regional economy has been affected by lower export growth, a decrease in foreign direct investment flows, and a slowdown in family remittances, while the socio-political crisis in Nicaragua has generated negative effects on Central American trade. As previously reported, the deterioration of the fiscal situation in these countries means that there is significantly less capacity to make adjustments in public spending and in financing social programs. Additionally, the combination of extreme poverty, disasters and increase in violence (including domestic violence) has resulted in Central America becoming one of the world's most dangerous regions for women. Moreover, children continue experiencing education and nutrition hardships as most schools have yet to fully open. For children to grow up healthy, we need to ensure families can access affordable, nutritious food. This involves helping communities to become more resilient and gender inclusive.

Despite this extremely difficult context, and by adjusting project delivery methods to a hybrid model of in-person and virtual (including WhatsApp groups, tablets, cell phones, videos and delivering messages through radio stations), **CARE reached 55,599 people directly (33,201 women) and 1,430,253 indirectly (928,620 women, mainly through radio and other platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, nutrition posters and flyers, and posters on gender-based violence prevention)** over the past three years. This **exceeded our original target** of 51,987 people directly and 1,214,793 people indirectly. Of the total number of people supported, 56% direct and 65% indirect were women, which is consistent with the gender priorities established by CARE at the onset of the project. Note that the project ended early in Nicaragua (February 2022) due to the socio-political crisis and closure of more than 100 non-governmental organizations, including CARE's partner Fabretto. While a final report for Nicaragua already was submitted to Cargill in May 2022, this consolidated regional report does include some key results from that country.

Women's empowerment. Over the course of the project, we rolled out and further intensified our regional gender strategy, with the primary goal to reduce violence and increase women's capability to perform economic activities. In Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua this included 400 trainings on gender equity, human rights, leadership and prevention of gender-based violence. Overall, we **directly reached 9,135 people (including 8,236 women producers, microentrepreneurs, teachers and mothers of students as well as 899 male leaders who were trained as replicators to promote "new masculinities")**. 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 develop economic activities increased from 68.5% to 85.8% at the regional level, according to the final evaluation.** Moreover, at the end of the project in Guatemala and Honduras, 57 of the trained men remained active as replicators in their communities, continuing to help improve the family environment, decrease violence against women and foster co-responsibility in household chores and childcare.

Access to productive resources AND inclusive markets. Of the 3,152 project participants reached through 1,718 training and technical assistance sessions (in-person and virtual), 2,624 (82%) were women farmers in Guatemala, Honduras and, through January 2022 in Nicaragua. According to the final evaluation, 63% of *livestock and tilapia* producers adopted at least three new agricultural technologies (e.g., use of balanced feed, automatic drinkers and automatic aerators) and sustainable agriculture/natural resource management practices, as well as marketing skills (including digital marketing) – up from 36.2% at baseline. **As noted in the table below, the income generated by 2,897 producers and microentrepreneurs (2,598 women) in Guatemala and Honduras more than tripled by the third year of the project despite adverse circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis.** Some factors contributing to this increase in the final year include the project redirecting funds and support for the rehabilitation of production and microenterprise activities, promotion of exchange experiences, gender and market studies, as well as a comparative pig fattening initiative in Honduras to demonstrate the benefits of using Alcon brand feed versus traditional food – the Alcon feed achieved a higher final weight (209 lbs. vs 125 lbs.) – resulting in more profitability for families. Moreover, to promote inclusive markets, we held virtual learning exercises to standardize production processes for tilapia, pork and basic grains for the same 3,152 people. And through municipal food fairs – mainly in Honduras – we increased the volume of sales by approximately 25%, allowing producers to make direct sales to families (with accessible prices) without intermediaries. Digital marketing also was introduced as an alternative to sell their products. **At the regional level, women farmer's access to output markets increased, from 25.4% at baseline to 42.2% at endline.**

	Income by year			Estimated average annual income		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Gross income	\$892,221	\$2,134,596	\$3,509,719	\$422	\$846	\$1,499
Net income	\$368,074	\$1,192,669	\$1,792,728			

*Guatemala and Honduras only as Year 3 data was not available for Nicaragua due to early project closure.

Of note, the highest income generated in the final year occurred in Honduras through the production of tilapia, pork, corn and beans by 634 families; they reserved 206.7 tons for self-consumption and donated 43.4 tons to other families in need. Moreover, at the end of the project, the rural savings banks in Honduras managed to save \$27,189 and provide loans to 208 members (160 women) totaling \$76,366 for production/entrepreneurship activities. **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. At the regional level, household income increased by 39.5% on average, from \$3,283 to \$4,581. 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%.**

Production Chain	Country	Net Income	Per Capita Income
Tilapia	Honduras	\$588,657	\$8,004
	Guatemala	\$22,887	\$3,827
Pork	Honduras	\$145,801	\$822
	Guatemala	\$18,323	\$381
Beans	Honduras	\$418,230	\$600
	Nicaragua	\$4,896	\$60
Corn	Honduras	\$183,319	\$611
	Nicaragua	\$12,054	\$98
Sorghum	Nicaragua	\$7,050	\$94
Watermelon and Squash	Nicaragua	\$3,831	\$212
Total		\$1,405,048	\$1,471 (average)

*Honduras and Guatemala through end of project and Nicaragua through 2021 (prior to office closure).

Nutrition. Despite school closures due to COVID-19, we **directly reached 49,297 schoolchildren, teachers and parents (mostly mothers) (29,357 women and girls) across all four countries through the promotion of nutritious foods/healthy eating habits at school and home.** To reach them, 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 across all countries. We also organized events for World Food Day. Of note, in Costa Rica, we produced eight different learning materials – teachers' manuals, activity books for family members, memory games, infographics and game books for different grades – for students, teachers and family members at six project schools. And, in Nicaragua where most schools were open, we held “best healthy dish” contests in nine communities with 24 mothers; a “best school garden” contest in 28 schools; and “best family garden” contest with 191 families. Another strategy developed by the project in Nicaragua (in Year 2) was a radio campaign on food and nutrition security (a five-part radio soap opera) that was broadcast over the final months of the project by three radio stations, reaching 10,403 direct participants and 42,097 people indirectly, for a total of 52,500 people (26,597 women) in project areas and beyond. This was a key adaptation in the face of COVID mobility restrictions.

As a result, **there was a 5% increase in households reporting a change in nutritional behavior and healthy lifestyles at the regional level, from 77.1% at baseline to 82.1% at endline.** It is important to note that due to school closures, CARE redirected resources to focus on developing more family gardens. As a result, this activity provided nutritious food for families with low resources during COVID school closures that deprived them of school meals. Overall, **the project supported 1,611 vegetable gardens** (58 school gardens, 1,545 family gardens and eight community gardens) across the four countries. In particular, 273,418 pounds (124 tons) of vegetables was produced via 556 family gardens in Honduras of which 63,786 pounds were consumed, 22,224 pounds donated to families with low resources, and 187,408 pounds sold for a net income of \$109,099 and per capita income of \$196. And before early project closure in Nicaragua, 28 school gardens produced 1.6 tons of vegetables and fruits (valued at \$1,346) to complement school meals, and 191 family gardens produced 11.7 tons of vegetables for home consumption (valued at \$7,296).

Country	# People trained on healthy eating and nutrition	# School gardens established	# Family gardens established	# Community gardens established
Honduras	16,919	15	556	8
Guatemala	13,615	13	798	-
Nicaragua	9,532	28	191	-
Costa Rica	9,231	2	-	-
Total	49,297	58	1,545	8

Strategic partnerships. Strategic partnerships were strengthened through various meetings and alliances with the private sector, state institutions and municipal governments to increase our impact and influence policy changes through the adoption of project content and working methods, particularly around healthy eating/increased access to nutritious food. We collaborated with 16 local and national authorities throughout the region and developed nine partnerships with civil society organizations and universities. The project also was successful in local-level advocacy. For example, 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%).** The announcement was made at an open town hall meeting in March 2022 with the participation of about 1,500 women (*pictured*).



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 (2,578 women) in Chimaltenango and Escuintla.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- The proportion of households below the poverty line decreased in Guatemala and Honduras, from 52.3% at baseline to 38.2% at endline, and 54.9% at baseline to 53.4% at endline, respectively.
- Moderate or severe food insecurity decreased in Guatemala, dropping from 66.1% at baseline to 37.5% at endline.
- At the regional level, the percentage of women with increased capacity to perform economic activity rose by 17.3%, from 68.5% at baseline to 85.8% at endline.
- At the regional level, women farmer’s access to output markets increased, from 25.4% at baseline to 42.2% at endline.
- Household income at the regional level increased to an average of \$4,581.12 per year, a 39.5% increase compared to baseline.

Project Achievements

Since CARE initiated *Nourishing the Future* in September 2019, we have **reached 55,599 people directly (33,201 women/60%) and 1,430,253 indirectly (928,620 women/65%). This exceeded our original target of 51,987 people directly and 1,214,793 people indirectly.** Based on challenges in increasing our indirect reach (due to COVID-19 mobility restrictions and lack of internet/smartphones to connect to virtual trainings and technical assistance), the project team established focal points in communities, cooperatives and associations to provide computer/smartphone access to facilitate trainings in small groups to transfer knowledge and increase our reach. CARE created content transmitted through various networks and radio stations to further increase our direct and indirect reach during the final six months of the project. CARE also joined multiple coalitions to influence policy and advocacy. If these coalitions are successful in influencing passage of women’ empowerment legislation, the project will indirectly reach more than 5 million people in Guatemala and Honduras. These advocacy actions are described under Change Area 5.

KPI	Direct Reach	Direct Reach (Women)	Direct Reach (Men)	Indirect Reach	Indirect Reach (Women)	Indirect Reach (Men)	Total Direct & Indirect Reach	Total Direct & Indirect Reach (Women)
# beneficiaries reached	55,599	33,201	22,398	1,430,253	928,620	501,633	1,485,852	961,821
# nutrition beneficiaries reached	49,297	29,357	19,940	1,101,262	746,940	354,322	1,150,559	776,297
# farmers and entrepreneurs reached	3,152	2,614	538	36,461	23,357	13,104	39,613	25,971

KPI	Total	Women	Men
# farmers part of Cargill’s supply chain	2,018	1,389	629
# farmers receiving technical assistance from Cargill	512	320	192

Change Area 1: Women’s empowerment.

As previously reported, CARE finalized a series of gender studies with 3,472 participants (3,264 women) from Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua to inform and amplify the project’s gender strategy and training approach in Year 3. The studies highlighted women’s constraints on achieving full participation in development as well as cultural particulars in each country, calling for a more contextualized gender approach and methodology in each country. During the project, we conducted 400 training sessions on gender equity, human rights, leadership and prevention of gender-based violence. Overall, we **directly reached 9,135 people (including 8,236 women producers, microentrepreneurs, teachers and mothers of students) as well as 899 male leaders who were trained as replicators to promote “new masculinities.”** However, even with the trainings and the significant reach, the women’s empowerment index did not significantly change at the regional level, a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which exacerbated deeply rooted gender inequities and harmful practices like gender-based violence.

Guatemala. During the project, we held reflection exercises with 1,838 people (1,690 women) in eight communities to identify gender issues (e.g., violence and lack of participation and decision making) and ways to combat them. The project team shared information on what to do and where to go if someone is suffering some type of violence. Among these tools, we created an app called *Advocacy School with Gender Approach*, which helped women in communities to learn and understand how to report cases of violence. The app has been used during training sessions and is constantly updated. We also held



in-person workshops with 728 people (652 women, *see table below*) to address various women’s empowerment themes, resulting in the creation of the Women’s Municipal Directorate to improve women’s capacities. Moreover, the project coordinated with the mayor’s office of Comalapa to broadcast a radio program in Spanish and Kaqchiquel on self-esteem and women’s agency that reached approximately 500 direct and 5,000 indirect beneficiaries as well as promoted the annual *16 Days of Activism* against gender-based violence campaign in November-December 2021, reaching 1,041 people (955 women) during four virtual sessions and three in-person sessions (*pictured*). Likewise, eight in-person sessions were held with small groups of women (a total of 325 mothers, leaders and producers) to address various types of violence and how to report cases. During these sessions, we observed that women are losing their fear of expressing their thoughts and ideas, opening up to sharing their personal experiences related to empowerment, food and nutrition, hygiene, etc. Lastly, in the third year of the project, we incorporated 412 new participants (363 women) from the National Literacy Committee (CONALFA) and Community Councils for Urban and Rural Development (COCODES) in the municipalities of Comalapa, San Martin Jilotepeque and Masagua to initiate events through which 239 people (195 women) were trained to promote self-esteem and leadership. The goal of all these activities was for participants to replicate their training/knowledge to create change in their communities and expand the project’s reach and impact.

Total # trained (728)	Women (652)	Men (76)	Origin of trainees	Training content
46	46	-	15 in Pachay, 10 in Simajhuleu and 21 in Masagua	Self-esteem, advocacy, use of leadership technologies, laws and conventions in favor of women, visibility of work at
123	117	6	CONALFA students from San Martin Jilotepeque, Masagua and Comalapa	
239	195	44	San Martin Jilotepeque, Comalapa and Masagua	

211	194	17	Teachers and community leaders	home, and inclusive language.
65	56	9	Municipal leaders from Pachay and Masagua	Human rights gender, women's economic empowerment model and advocacy
44	44	-	Direct beneficiary leaders from San Martin Jilotepeque and Comalapa	Use of digital app, human rights, women's empowerment and self-esteem.

Honduras. To address the inequality gap between men and women, we trained 1,668 people (1,230 women) on roles, stereotypes, gender discrimination, inequitable workload of women and prevention of violence. The training reached women producers, microentrepreneurs, mothers of schoolchildren, women community leaders, and male producers and community leaders. They also participated in activities to commemorate International Women's Day and Rural Women's Day. Moreover, 217 male community leaders and municipal employees participated in six masculinities workshops (*pictured*) to set an example and support desired changes in their communities. We also promoted women's empowerment by facilitating the exchange of best practices and lessons learned among



214 women tilapia and basic grain farmers from Santa Cruz de Yojoa, Villanueva, San Marcos and Quimistán. In addition, CARE and the Women's Rights Center supported 156 women with training to increase their knowledge and skills necessary to improve the performance of Rural Savings and Credit Unions in their municipalities. The overall goal was for participants to replicate their knowledge to sensitize others in their communities about the contributions women make to food security, income generation and family wellbeing.

Total # trained (1,668)	Women (1,230)	Men (438)	Origin of trainees	Training content
865	700	165	Siguatpeque, Santa Cruz de Yojoa, Villanueva Quimistan and San Marcos (mothers, fathers and teachers)	Gender equity and equality and rights.
217	-	217	Community leaders and municipal employees	
268	214	54	Siguatpeque, Santa Cruz de Yojoa, Villanueva, Quimistan and San Marcos. (producers and microentrepreneurs)	Focus on strategies to foster social and political empowerment.
72	70	2	Siguatpeque (mothers of students, producers and microentrepreneurs)	Workshop on self-esteem and emotional restoration.
90	90	-	Commemorative event for International Women's Day in Santa Cruz de Yojoa	Discussions on gender equity, equality and rights.
156	156	-	Community and association leaders	Advocacy and rights training.

Nicaragua. In March to June 2020, CARE finalized a gender study with 208 participants (144 women) in Nicaragua to inform the project's gender strategy and training approach. We began implementing a training plan based on key findings from that study in the context of COVID-19 and increase of gender-based violence in the country. Prior to the untimely early closure of the project, we had started

introducing gender dialogues and discussions of social standards to promote transformative gender changes with women producers and microentrepreneur organizations linked to community banks. This commenced in October 2021 and overall, (up to January 2022), 470 people (320 women, *see table below*) were trained through various group sessions to promote gender dialogues, with an impact on internal change and strengthening self-esteem. Participants who most identified with the domestic violence issue were from the municipalities of Chinandega and Tipitapa.

According to one participant, *"We know of cases of women who experience violence, and we encourage them to talk about the situation with someone they trust and then to file a complaint. But authorities do nothing, the police take a long time to arrive or even pay attention."* This expression shows the change that is taking place in women to motivate others to denounce violence. The training helped these women in collectively using their voice to change the situation. Moreover, to further promote women's rights and shared responsibilities – and reach more community leaders, producers/microentrepreneurs and mothers/fathers – we created a five-part radio soap opera that aired on five local radio stations during the last semester of 2021, helping us reach 10,403 direct participants and 42,097 indirect participants, for a total of 52,500 people (26,597 women). Additionally, we shared information through WhatsApp groups, Facebook and Instagram, reaching 551 mothers and microentrepreneurs on Rural Women's Day, International Food Day and International Day to Combat Violence Against Women.

Total # trained (470)	Women (320)	Men (150)	Origin of trainees	Training content
93	93	-	Microentrepreneurs	Gender-based violence, identify risk situations, assertive communication, gender stereotypes and roles, and sharing household chores.
71	71	-	Producers	
103	42	61	Producers and microentrepreneurs linked to community banks	
55	55	-	Producers and microentrepreneurs	
59	59	-	Women community leaders	New masculinities focused on women's rights, prevention of gender-based violence, equality in decision-making, gender equity, distribution of roles.
89	0	89	22 were selected for replication in their communities	

Change Area 2: Access to productive resources.

Women's economic empowerment is directly linked to having access to the inputs and technology needed for producing and commercializing their products, as well as their organizational and managerial capacity. A total of 3,152 producers and microentrepreneurs participating in the project (2,624 women, including eight women microentrepreneurs in Costa Rica) were directly supported with access to productive resources to help them increase their income. **As a result of the project's integrated activities under this area of change, at the regional level, there was a 17.3% increase in women's capability to perform economic activity and a 3.1% increase in the proportion of women with access to, control over, or ownership of a core set of productive resources, assets and services.**

Country	Total (Farmers /Microentrepreneurs)	Farmers		Microentrepreneurs	
		Women	Men	Women	Men
Guatemala	492	381	48	50	13
Nicaragua	420	164	151	105	-
Honduras	2,232	1,388	283	528	33
Costa Rica*	8	-	-	8	-
Total	3,152	1,933	482	691	46

*In Costa Rica, we reached eight women microentrepreneurs with basic training on how to start a business.

Guatemala. CARE adapted to COVID-19 restrictions by using information and communication technology for remote training and holding face-to-face meetings with a maximum of 10 people. We delivered 12 tablets (loaded with applications/training materials including the Advocacy School app with information on what to do if someone is experiencing violence) for use by 50 women leaders linked to the project. We also provided training and technical assistance through home visits and with small groups, reaching 429 producers (381 women) and 63 microentrepreneurs (50 women) in San Martín Jilotepeque, Comalapa in Chimaltenango, Masagua in Escuintla and in Zone 3 of Guatemala City. A key result of the training/technical assistance was the reduction of losses in pig production due to common diseases.

Total trained	Women	Men	Origin of trainees	Training content
477	420	57	Pork producers/microentrepreneurs of Masagua, Comalapa and San Martin Jilotepeque	Fund management and marketing skills as well as the adoption of good practices for pigs and fish production.
15	1	14	Tilapia producers of Masagua	
63	50	13	Active microentrepreneurs with small grocery stores	10 exercises to determine production costs to better position the products in the market.

For pork and tilapia, during the final year of the project, there were three exchange of experience exercises (two with pig producers and one with tilapia producers) with the participation of 39 farmers (35 women) from Jilotepeque, San Juan Comalapa and Masagua. In particular, during exchanges with pig farmers, discussions centered around introducing pigs with good genetics and using balanced feed and automatic feeders and drinkers. The exchange among tilapia producers (*pictured*) took place at the University of San Carlos, focusing on optimal environmental conditions, water quality, oxygen levels, feeding, weight gain and common diseases. Additionally, 71 tilapia producers (67 women) from Chimaltenango and Masagua participated in 10 exercises to determine production costs of their activities to better position the products in the local market at a fair price. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock was involved in technical training and marketing activities with tilapia producers in Masagua, establishing a marketing channel with the Santa Ana enterprise (feed mill) as well as supporting the exchange of experiences (i.e., management of production and food alternatives) with 10 tilapia producers in Masagua. **As a result of these activities, women’s access to, control over, or ownership of productive resources, assets and services in Guatemala increased from**



13.3% at baseline to 17.5% at endline. Regarding production, overall, there were no major increases in pork and tilapia. Production decreased by 8% for both pork and tilapia in the final year because of COVID-19 mobility restrictions, increased input costs and hurricanes Eta and Iota. **However, red bean production increased 50%, from .08 tons/Ha at baseline to .12 tons/Ha at endline.**

Also, during the final year, five self-saving groups were formed with 54 women from Pachay, San Martín Jilotepeque and Comalapa, with a cumulative savings of \$487, **contributing to an increase in the proportion of women who are active users of financial services in Guatemala, from 10.9% at baseline to 13.2% at endline.** Twenty-five microentrepreneurs and producers (20 women) from Zone 3 of Guatemala City, Chimaltenango and Masagua participated in a course on business planning and digital marketing. Note that women microentrepreneurs are still heavily affected by the pandemic and related restrictions. As previously reported, many microentrepreneurs have either changed their activity, sold their assets or migrated to other cities due to adverse economic conditions.

Economic Activity	# Beneficiaries	Volume produced (kilograms)	Gross sales	Net sales	Per capita
Pig production	414	36,206	\$116,749	\$18,323	\$381
Tilapia	15	25,603	\$69,627	\$22,887	\$3,827
Microenterprises	63	-	\$591,246	\$162,984	\$3,856
Total	492	61,809	\$777,622	\$214,194	\$2,688

Honduras. There were 1,671 producers (1,388 women) and 561 microentrepreneurs (528 women). Of note, in December 2021 the project invested \$13,574 to support the economic recovery of 300 women microentrepreneurs who sold food, including 150 in urban areas of five municipalities receiving vouchers (each for 1,000 lempiras/\$61, totaling \$9,150) to purchase inputs from supermarkets (*pictured*) and 150 microentrepreneurs from semi-urban and rural areas from the five municipalities receiving chicken (each received 30 pounds for a total of 4,500 pounds valued at \$4,464) to reactivate their food sales businesses. **Moreover, 25 rural savings banks with 1,034 members (720 women) supported by the project made 160 loans to women and 48 loans to men totaling \$76,366 (1% minimum and 3% maximum monthly interest rate) to develop commercial and production activities. Using these loans, 24 new women’s enterprises were started.** In terms of savings, **255 people (181 women) saved \$27,189.**



We helped 16 rural savings banks obtain legal status, meeting new National Entrepreneurship and Small Business Service (SENPRENDE) requirements. We also supported learning exchanges with 62 women members (and Board of Directors) of 19 rural savings banks in Siguatepeque, Santa Cruz de Yojoa, Villanueva, Quimistan and San Marcos. During these learning exchanges, participants with the most experience shared their successes and the challenges they’ve overcome to achieve sustainability of their banks (e.g., managing accounting books, providing loans, administrative practices, etc.). Additionally, in collaboration with rural savings banks, 15 microentrepreneurs (10 women) from Villanueva were trained in accounting and calculating loan interest. Overall, the project supported 36 organizations (28 rural savings banks and eight associations) with 1,034 members (720 women).

For **pork**, 147 pig farmers have adopted practices promoted by the project, including disinfecting pens, cementing pen floors, deworming, vaccinating pigs, castrating pigs and using balanced feed. We provided in-person technical assistance to advise them on the type of feed to use according to the age and weight of pigs, and 20 women farmers were provided a piglet with good genetics. In Siguatepeque and Villanueva, we supported 50 producers (23 women) with demonstration training on pig slaughtering, hygiene practices, and correct pig trimming to make specialized cuts; during the demonstrations, five pigs produced 1,118 pounds of pork. In Santa Cruz de Yojoa, 14 pig producers (four women) were provided four breeding sows and two boars to continue introducing good quality genetics (Landrace and York breeds), and nine pig producers (seven women) in Siguatepeque purchased 11 piglets with their profits from piglets previously provided by the project. Five slaughter kits (stainless steel worktable and knives) were provided to savings groups in five communities.



For **tilapia**, 66 producers (26 women) are now implementing practices promoted by the project such as the use of sex/gender reversal techniques to increase production of tilapia fingerlings, aerators to improve oxygen, balanced feed, and recording their costs and income. In addition, we held training sessions on fish filleting and pickling with 75 people in Siguatepeque (25 women microentrepreneurs and 50 producers including 30 women) and 34 producers (13 women) in San Marcos and Quimistan. The goal of the training was to add value to the tilapia meat product and explore new markets for the producers/microentrepreneurs.

As a result of these activities, tilapia producers in Honduras doubled their yield from 3kg/m³ at baseline to 6.19kg/m³. Increased yield is partly due to more tilapia farmers adopting good aquaculture practices, evidenced by the 61.5% increase in Honduran livestock and aquaculture producers adopting at least three agricultural technologies or practices.

In terms of **corn, beans and vegetable production**, 488 producers (257 women) are implementing good agricultural practices promoted by the project, such as crop rotation, staggered planting, and proper organic fertilizer management. To further support those hit by the pandemic-related economic crisis, we delivered 520 sacks of fertilizer (valued at \$14,148) to 260 producers (160 women) in the municipalities served by the project to help reactivate their livelihoods. Overall, on average, **the project team made 70 technical visits per month to producers of basic grains, pork, tilapia and family/community gardens**, providing advice on weight controls, feeding recommendations by age and weight, oxygen measurements, planting recommendations and correct application of fertilizers. **As a result of these efforts, women's access to, control over, or ownership of productive resources, assets and services in Honduras increased from 21.2% at baseline to 28.2% at endline.**

Corn and bean yields nearly doubled, from 1.1 tons/ha to 2.1 tons/ha and from 0.51 tons/ha to 1.15 tons/ha.

Economic Activity	# People	Volume produced (metric tons)	Volume consumed in households (metric tons)	Gross sales	Net sales	Per capita	Donation received
Pig production (metric tons)	147	52.96	2.37	\$278,443	\$145,801	\$822	0.62 tons (265 families)
Tilapia	66	734.60	7.46	\$1,956,828	\$588,657	\$8,004	8.49 tons (671 families /3 schools)
Corn	267	1,010.14	157.17	\$447,118	\$183,319	\$611	22.55 tons (487 families)
Beans	221	306.92	39.72	\$754,588	\$418,230	\$600	11.69 tons (277 families)
Microenterprises	230	-	-	\$2,252,091	\$1,592,903	\$2,509	-

Nicaragua. At the start of the project, we initially reached 327 producers (164 women), grouped into six cooperatives, seven groups and one association. However, due to the pandemic and migration, the number of producers was reduced to 314 (163 women) by the end of the project (as well as 60 women microentrepreneurs, down from 93). During online (including WhatsApp and videos) and in-person sessions, we discussed their management of sorghum, corn and bean crops, post-harvest practices, use of natural ways to combat insects, as well as the proper feeding of pigs with some farmers. These producers were tasked with sharing the information with their local associations/cooperatives and communities.

Note that just before the harvest in November 2020, Hurricanes Eta and Iota – hitting two weeks apart – destroyed production areas causing 90% losses in beans, 80% for corn and 15% for sorghum.

Despite the impact of these hurricanes, the total sorghum production was 252.3 tons harvested by 51 producers (17 women), which was planted later than other crops, resulting in a 35.7% higher yield compared to baseline. In turn, 129 producers (72 women) whose corn, beans and sorghum were affected by the hurricanes in four municipalities began piloting new crops. The project provided them with seeds and inputs to plant watermelon and squash as a way to take advantage of wet conditions and rapidly recover their livelihoods. The revenue generated was \$30,025 for watermelon and \$17,045 for squash, with an average per capita income of \$527.



Before the “first 2021” planting period, CARE worked with producer organizations to update their production plans. It was decided that this period would focus on subsistence and seed production using corn and bean transfer plots on a total of 40 manzanas (28 hectares) using higher quality seeds. We continued to promote good agricultural practices, integrated pest management, and practical elements of agroecology. During this time, rains started later causing uncertainty on proposing larger planting areas. However, one milestone reached was the early production of SEMSA corn seed. Forty-four producers (22 women) yielded 77,000 pounds of corn to meet their expectations, with 73,900 pounds sold at the market for a net income of \$3,839 and per capita income of \$87. The rest was used for seed production. For beans, 20 producers (three women) generated a net income of \$15,871 and per capita income of \$793 by selling 48% of the 45,400 pounds harvested.

At the start of the last semester of the project (August 2021), there was a broader participation of women producers – 323 producers of which 156 were women – planting a total of 639 manzanas (376 hectares), of which 30% were beans, 25% white corn, 25% rice and 20% sorghum. Also, 18 producers (five women) received inputs for watermelon. Inputs were provided for the “final sowing” of a total of 23 manzanas (16.1 hectares) of corn and rice, benefiting 23 producers (20 women), plus inputs for planting 100 manzanas (70 hectares) of sorghum with 82 producers (49 women). Sorghum production was 353,600 pounds (2,700 pounds per manzana/1.88 tons per hectare); 556,100 pounds of corn (3,500 pounds per manzana/2.44 tons per hectare); and 124,500 pounds of beans (56,600 pounds per manzana/0.46 tons per hectare).

Throughout the project, we promoted the adoption of new technologies and practices to improve soil and water management. In 2020, the project provided 90 tons of soil to improve 100 manzanas (71 hectares) for 83 producers (34 women). Over time the process was monitored to combine organic fertilizer. By January 2022, producers of the El Pellizco cooperative made purchases with their own money, which is a clear indication that they saw value in and adopted soil improvement and water conservation methods to increase their yields.

Moreover, to encourage increased production we organized a “Best Sorghum Plot” contest in late 2021 with 12 finalist plots (four per community) with the participation of 12 producers (six women). A winner was selected in each community and awarded a 20-liter spray pump (including Erayda Morales in El Viejo who produced an average yield of 3.2 tons per hectare, *pictured*).



In addition, to help revive livelihoods, given the continuing deterioration of the situation in Nicaragua as a result of the severe socio-political-economic crisis and COVID, 51 backpack-type sprinklers were delivered to the same number of producers in August 2021. Also, 195 two-month food aid packages were delivered to 129 women producers and 66 male producers, and 45 one-month food aid packages were delivered to women microentrepreneurs. It allowed them to use what little profits they got from their business instead of buying food. Aid packages included corn, beans, rice, sugar, soybeans, oil, masks and soap, benefiting approximately 1,200 people (five per family). Before project closure, we also had planned to support women microentrepreneurs in replenishing their inventory as a way to help them reactivate their businesses.

Regarding **pig farms**, the activity was postponed until October 2020 due to the pandemic. As of February 2022, there were seven active pig farms managed by 38 producers (30 women) of which five farms had a total of seven piglet breeders – purchased with their own income and valued at \$2,791 – that supply piglets to other farms for approximately \$60 a piglet. Net income for the final period was \$3,087, with a per capita income of \$82. This reflected good preliminary results from the adjusted strategy during the final months of the project. **Tilapia fish farms** also were promoted by the project but were affected by a combination of factors like a significant increase in the cost of electricity to power aerators to supply oxygen to the fish tanks and reduced mobility caused by the pandemic. Of the two fish farms established in San Benito and El Pellizco, only the one with the El Pellizco cooperative with seven producers (five women) remained operational for self-consumption for members, with low community sales generating a net income of \$627 in 2021. **Despite this setback, tilapia production increased by 23%, from 4.4kg/m³ at baseline to 5.4kg/m³ at endline.** The few revenues earned were

used to cover operating costs. In late 2021, the system was rehabilitated with the participation of Aquaculture Engineering graduate students from the National Autonomous University in León, allowing for a new activity in planting lettuce (linked to fattening fish). According to an analysis of the process, three complete cycles of lettuce planting and 1.5 monthly cycles of fish sales can be carried out each year. We expected it would result in a gross income of \$1,900 from lettuce sales and \$1,500 from fish sales, thus exceeding previous income. In addition, in October 2021, the university students began assessing a comparison of bofé flour-based food versus commercial protein to feed the tilapia, finding the former has a higher protein content of 73% (compared to 35% for commercial). Using this feed would reduce production costs. However, the closing of CARE's partner Fabretto stopped the process before it could be implemented. The government of Nicaragua, for political reasons, decided to close many NGOs and cancel permission to operate in country. Since then, there have been many lawsuits filed for not allowing freedom of expression.

Regarding **capital resources**, CARE supported community banks as a way to access loans, create a culture of savings, and promote members' personal and collective empowerment. However, it was a major challenge to save/raise capital (and thereby provide and repay loans) because of the economic crisis. By the end of 2021, 14 cooperatives/groups were managing a capital of \$43,215, of which \$34,170 were funds used as loans to support the production of project farmers and other members. Each cooperative/group focuses on sustainability. For example, in addition to providing loans, the Las Nubes group in Chichigalpa manages the demand for farmer input needs according to the types of crops they grow, making wholesale purchases of those inputs at a better price that member producers benefit from.

For **community banks (savings and loan groups)**, we focused on supporting five community banks with 45 women microentrepreneurs at the start of the phase. These community banks began with a cumulative capital of \$1,270. As of January 2022, their cumulative capital had increased to \$2,538. Note that one of the five original community banks closed in 2021 because of the internal crisis in the country resulting in members migrating and stopping operations. At the time the project ended, there was a total of six community banks with 60 women microentrepreneurs, located in the three municipalities of Chinandega (3), Masaya (1) and Tipitapa (2).

Change Area 3: Access to inclusive markets.

Women's empowerment, producer and entrepreneurship training, and access to productive resources are necessary elements for successfully participating in markets. Market participation also depends on external conditions. In this regard, the economic crisis complicated identifying profitable investment opportunities, particularly for microentrepreneurs. The project worked to establish alliances with private organizations and government authorities to identify income-generating options for families. **At the regional level, 42.2% of women had access to output markets through their producer collectives, an increase of 16.8% from baseline, indicating that the project impacted people in terms of group organization and social and productive empowerment.**

Moreover, 58.9% of farmers actively participated in Cargill's business chain, an increase of 19.4% from baseline, an important market linkage. As a result of greater access to markets and productive resources, household income increased by 39.5% on average at the regional level.

Guatemala. Over the three-year project, 429 pork and tilapia producers (381 women) generated a gross income of \$187,376, net income of \$41,210 and per capita income of \$4,208. Additionally, 63 microentrepreneurs generated \$162,984 and per capita income of \$3,856 per family to contribute to the local economy. However, it is important to note that during the final year of the project, municipalities

remained in a state of red alert due to spikes in COVID-19 cases from the Omicron variant. This limited our ability to provide in-person technical assistance. In tandem, there has been a rise in prices of agricultural inputs and cost of animal feed in the country by at least 10%. Despite challenges, the 492 pig and tilapia producers and microentrepreneurs (431 women) generated a sales income of \$214,193.

Microenterprise was the most affected economic activity. Despite efforts to keep microentrepreneurs active, interest in participation remained low in the final year. However, we provided virtual training on business development/planning and of the 18 active women microentrepreneurs, six women achieved a certain level of sales (mainly from small grocery stores) generating \$3,283 in gross income, \$334 in net income and \$19 in per capita income.

During the final semester of the project, 414 **pig** farmers (370 women) sold 36.2 tons of meat for a gross income of \$116,749, net income of \$18,323 and per capita income of \$381. For **tilapia**, 14 producers (one woman) completed the production cycle with 25.6 tons, generating a gross income of \$69,627, net income of \$18,323 and per capita income of \$3,827. **Overall, 44.4% of women Guatemalan producers now market products through collectives, compared to 0% at the start of the project.** Moreover, 80.8% of Guatemalan producers and microentrepreneurs are now part of Cargill's business chain, representing a 66.4% increase from baseline. **As a result of these market linkages, sale of production and the project's holistic approaches, household income in Guatemala increased 47.4% between baseline and endline, from \$3,027 to \$4,462.**

Honduras. Over the three-year project, 1,130 producers of pork, tilapia and crops (634 women) generated a gross income of \$3,436,977, net income of \$1,336,007 and per capita income of \$1,182, and created 4,421 temporary jobs. Net income showed a growth of 83.8% - from USD \$216,337 in Year 1 to \$1,336,007 in Year 3. Additionally, 230 microentrepreneurs generated \$1,592,902 and per capital income of \$5,897 per family, and created 189 temporary jobs that contributed to the development of the local economy. Effective actions to achieve these results were 634 training and technical assistance sessions in production, marketing and identification of potential markets, development of digital marketing skills and transformation processes to add value to products and diversify sales opportunities. In that sense, 23 women association members in Santa Cruz de Yojoa received training in the processing and packaging of pineapple jam and pineapple in syrup; nine association members in Quimistan received training in meat processing and preparation of packaged beans; and 136 tilapia producers (82 women) from Santa Cruz de Yojoa, Villanueva, San Marcos and Quimistan participated in a workshop on fish filleting and pickling. We also delivered slaughter kits (stainless steel worktables and specialized knives) to five pig producers in Quimistan.

To stimulate sales of their products without intermediaries, a rural women's fair was held in Villanueva with the participation of 25 women microentrepreneurs and 21 producers of pigs, tilapia, vegetables and basic grains belonging to five rural savings banks. At the fair, the producers sold 550 pounds of tilapia, 280 pounds of pork, 400 pounds of basic grains, 150 pounds of vegetables and 20 egg cartons, generating \$42,000 in income. We also formed an alliance with the Business Development Center (CDE Valle de Sula) to launch a platform in the city of San Pedro Sula where participants can promote and sell their products digitally (through www.micontact.org) and contact customers directly. The Business Development Center also supported the delivery of \$4,166 in supplies and products to two producers and four microentrepreneurs to strengthen their businesses. **Overall, 41.3% of women Honduran producers now market products through collectives, compared to 38.2% at baseline. As a result of these market linkages and access to productive resources, household income in Honduras increased by 26.6% between baseline and endline, from \$3,680 to \$4,658.**



A woman farmer sells vegetables and a microentrepreneur sells fried tilapia at a municipal fair in Honduras.

Nicaragua. During the project, 253 producers of pork and tilapia (128 women) generated a gross income of \$44,163, net income of \$27,831 and per capita income of \$1,094. The political context, together with the pandemic crisis, limited project progress in facilitating broad market opportunities during incredible economic hardship and increase in the cost of inputs.

Microentrepreneurs faced severe economic challenges due to COVID-19 and other related circumstances. Before project closure, only four (of 23) had active businesses, but they were just breaking even. Eight other women microentrepreneurs from the previous phase (who received freezers for storing/selling chicken meat and sausages) showed an average monthly net income of \$269 that they used to buy food and pay medical expenses; however, their sales dropped by over 50%.

In May and June 2021, we conducted a market research study for pork and tilapia in Chinandega and Chichigalpa (in Chinandega department) and Larreynaga and El Jicaral (in Leon department). The study identified aspects that hinder market development and made recommendations for improvement such as creation of infrastructure for the collection of pork and tilapia that was incorporated into our strategy. However, activities such as strengthening cooperatives and installing storage facilities – planned for the last semester of the project – were no longer possible as the project/Fabretto was unexpectedly closed.

Despite challenges and setbacks, producers were able to sell (mainly sorghum) to local markets. In 2021, 75 producers (39 women) harvested 352,600 pounds of **sorghum** of which 194,400 pounds were sold for a gross income of \$29,830, net income of \$7,051 and per capita income of \$94. Of the remaining sorghum harvested, 24,800 pounds were used for self-consumption and 133,400 pounds were stored (waiting for a better sales price). In the previous phase of the project, metal silos were provided, and producers were trained on their use. **White corn** was harvested by 122 producers (54 women) who generated a net income of \$12,054 and per capita income of \$99 from the sale of 292,700 pounds in the local market; 263,400 pounds were stored as a food reserve for self-consumption or to sell a better price. **Red beans** generated a gross income of \$14,333, net income of \$4,896 and per capita income of \$60 for 122 farmers (54 women) by selling 64,500 pounds; 124,500 pounds of red beans were stored for self-consumption. Regarding **squash and watermelons**, 18 producers (five women) in Rancho Liliam and Las Nubes communities were expected to harvest at the end of February 2022 (after project closure), with a projected net income of \$3,831 and per capita income of \$212. For **pork** production, we took

learnings from Honduras and applied them in Nicaragua to promote model breeding farms; as of early February 2022 there were seven active pig farms managed by 38 producers (30 women) of which five farms have seven breeders purchased with their own income and valued at \$2,791. For **tilapia**, changes and upgrades were made at the fish farm in El Pellizco (explained in previous section) to activate fish (and lettuce) sales for the cooperative in 2022.

Change Area 4: Nutrition.

CARE worked to strengthen the link between education, nutrition and health even during ongoing school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and spread of the new Omicron variant. The project implemented the use of new forms of virtual and in-person work to directly reach 49,297 schoolchildren, teachers and parents (mostly mothers) across all four countries through the promotion of nutritious foods/healthy eating habits at school and home. To reach them, 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. We **supported 1,611 vegetable gardens (58 school gardens, 1,545 family gardens and eight community gardens) across the four countries**. The project also designed 18 materials in Costa Rica and Honduras on healthy eating, nutrition, gender equality and violence prevention in a volume of 36,549 copies, of which 21,284 were delivered to schoolchildren, 5,809 to mothers, 9,450 to teachers and six to schools.

Moreover, **the graduation process of model schools began in February 2022 and concluded in August 2022 (for the first subset of 13 schools – six in Honduras, five in Guatemala and two in Costa Rica)**. The school graduation process includes: 1) delivering teaching and learning materials; 2) reinforcing issues of nutrition, hygiene, healthy lifestyles and providing gender training to teachers and mothers in the school community; 3) completing minimal repairs to bathrooms, kitchens and gardens at the school; 4) signing an agreement between the school community and the project, emphasizing the school's commitment to continue replicating the project's food and nutritional security model; and 5) conducting a symbolic graduation ceremony where awards are given to the model school.

Country	Students	Parents		Teachers	Total
		Mothers	Fathers		
Honduras	10,309	5,675	573	362	16,919
Guatemala	10,574	2,307	400	334	13,615
Nicaragua	7,261	1,632	279	360	9,532
Costa Rica	8,787	342	79	23	9,231

Guatemala. A total of 13,615 people were reached over the past three years, of which 10,574 were students, 2,307 were mothers, 400 were fathers and 334 were teachers. As previously reported, to help focus the project's food and nutrition educational activities, we conducted a sample study to evaluate the level of knowledge of 225 teachers from 24 schools, 125 parents and 327 schoolchildren on the food groups and the quantity and quality of food/water to consume. The results showed 84% of teachers having good knowledge, 11% with an average level and 14% with basic knowledge. The results were lower with children, with 27% having a good level, 59% average and 14% with basic knowledge. Parents, overall, demonstrated a good command of knowledge and adequate practices related to family gardens and eating more than one portion of fruits or vegetables during the day. Based on those

results, 187 teachers (166 women) from 24 schools received training through eight virtual sessions, primarily focused on developing interactive ways to instruct students on diversifying diets, nutrients contained in different local foods and their functions, and how much to consume. Ten of those teachers from two schools established their own family gardens.

During the project, we **created 13 school gardens and 798 family gardens** (including 108 family urban gardens) in Masagua, Chimaltenango and Guatemala City. Households that are now producing a harvest are able to eat, sell or exchange products like broccoli, radishes, cucumbers and spinach with other families in their communities. We provided these gardening families with technical support and demonstrations on nutritious recipes that contain herbs and other ingredients to make soups and vegetable pancakes.

To commemorate World Food Day and Global Handwashing Day, 1,277 people (1,095 women) and 49 volunteers (14 from Cargill, 22 from Purina and 13 from Perry) supported family gardens and/or participated in events/fairs to promote the consumption of local food. Nutritious recipes were prepared such as herb pancakes, fruit salad, vegetable salads, and natural drinks with cucumber and pineapple. Safe water consumption, proper handwashing and COVID prevention also were promoted. In addition, Cargill volunteers distributed food plates to 300 vulnerable families in school communities. Discussions were held in November 2021 with the Perry plant focal point to resume growing seedlings for green leafy vegetables, for distribution to family gardens.

Moreover, five schools completed the model school graduation process on August 17, 2022, benefiting 1,624 students and 63 teachers (see table below). The schools, including the Francisco Coll Educational Center (pictured), received the endorsement of district educational authorities.



Location	School	Boys	Girls	Total children	Total Teachers
Chimaltenango	Mixed Rural School of Simajhuleu	180	189	369	19
	Urban School for Girls	0	366	366	15
Guatemala Zone 3	Francisco Coll Educational Center	109	149	258	8
	Santa Luisa Mixed Urban School	217	254	471	16
Guatemala Zone 11	Official Nursery School #62	84	76	160	5
Total		590	1,034	1,624	63

Honduras. A total of 16,919 students, parents and teachers were reached/trained on healthy eating and nutrition. Due to school closures, CARE redirected resources to focus on developing more family gardens. In the five target municipalities, we implemented **556 family gardens, 15 school gardens and eight community gardens.** As a result, this activity provided nutritious food for highly vulnerable families/children during COVID school closures that deprived them of school meals. Overall, family gardens produced 273,418 pounds (137 tons) of vegetables of which 63,786 pounds were consumed, 22,224 donated to vulnerable families, and 187,408 pounds sold for a net income of \$109,099 and per capita income of \$196. Community gardens were mainly implemented in the last semester, producing 3,367 pounds of which 1,935 pounds were consumed and 1,432 pounds were sold with \$712 reinvested in the next planting. In the final semester we also completed the process of establishing six model schools with gardens (see table below).



Location	School	Total children	Total teachers	Total mothers/fathers involved in		
				School snacks	School gardens	School repairs
Zapote	República de Chile	168	6	10	5	7
B° El Capiro	John F. Kennedy	1,090	31	10	5	7
El Porvenir	Max Martinez Zambrano	235	13	12	10	7
Potrerosillos	Marco Aurelio Soto	455	18	13	10	7
Corralitos	15 de Septiembre	109	3	12	5	7
San Isidro	Miguel Paz Barahona	406	17	12	5	7
Total		2,463	88	69	40	42

Despite the effects of COVID and two hurricanes, the family and community gardens implemented in the final year of the project had a positive result on household diets, especially women. Honduras was the only country that achieved a positive increase in the minimum dietary diversity for women, from 50.5% at baseline to 55.4% at endline – a 5% increase. There also was a slight increase for school-age children.

Key to establishing gardens was the participation of **50 Cargill volunteers** who helped plant 18,400 seeds to produce watermelon, cucumber, onion, carrot, cabbage and tomato, benefiting 115 families that produced 48.2 tons as a result. Also, in Siguatepeque, **10 Cargill volunteers** delivered 500 seedlings of cabbage, parsley, tomato, lettuce, cucumber and radishes to the Corralitos community group as well as delivered radish, coriander, mustard, foliar seeds, fertilizer and irrigation pumps to 100 mothers of schoolchildren and two microentrepreneurs to support them in establishing family gardens.

During World Food Day in October 2021, the project promoted healthy lifestyles, hygiene and facilitated educational games (pictured) with 3,985 children (1,912 girls) at fairs in 12 schools. Ten different types of printed materials were provided to 10,115 schoolchildren, 4,800 mothers and 1,332 teachers as part of virtual training on healthy eating/nutrition. The materials included teachers



guides on food and nutrition, garden manuals, nutrition brochures for children, pictures on proper handwashing, card games for healthy lifestyles and posters.

Nicaragua. We worked to strengthen the link between education, nutrition and health even during school closures (primarily in 2020) due to the COVID-19 pandemic and spread of the new Omicron variant. During the project we **reached 9,532 people directly with nutrition activities** and 26,322 people indirectly.

Students	Parents		Teachers	Total
	Mothers	Fathers		
7,261	1,632	279	360	9,532

Various coordination meetings (virtual and in-person) were held in 2020 and 2021 with directors, heads of schools and teachers in Chinandega, Tipitapa, Masaya and Managua to plan and coordinate activities, including introducing gender awareness and promoting healthy food and hygiene habits in schools. The project **reached 360 teachers (320 women) through different training activities** on healthy eating for school-age children, nutritious snacks, and implementing school gardens. Similar training also reached 53 teachers (46 women) from schools not covered by the project but in the same educational districts as our project schools, to ensure total coverage. Note that Nicaragua was the only country in the region that did not suspend classes due to the pandemic in 2021. Thus, at the beginning of the 2021 school year, as part of the “Back to School with Cargill” campaign, CARE and Cargill delivered cleaning products, including soap, chlorine, mops and alcohol gel to all 28 schools. Masks were provided for 6,851 students (3,083 girls) and 291 teachers (261 women). Moreover, we trained 300 teachers (269 women) to conduct handwashing activities to help prevent the spread of COVID. Later in 2021, oral hygiene kits (toothbrushes/toothpaste) were delivered to 3,038 students (1,586 girls) as well as soap for handwashing and facemasks to 6,922 students (3,303 girls), distributed by teachers in their classrooms. Due to limited access to technology/online in some communities, the project presented videos to 112 parents (99 mothers), covering handwashing, food safety, COVID prevention and vaccination. Afterward, surveys were conducted through the KoBo Collect app to evaluate the level of knowledge obtained; findings of the assessment were 9.8 (on a scale of 10, with 10 being the highest level of knowledge acquired).

All teachers from the 28 schools were involved in gender awareness activities and a new subject, “Equality and Human Rights of Women,” was incorporated into the school curriculum in April 2021.

Teachers also facilitated awareness-raising discussions on sex and gender with 963 parents (784 women) and 692 schoolchildren (503 girls). Moreover, gender reflection sessions were held with school feeding committees with 102 participants (89 women) from 10 schools, addressing the equitable division of labor in the family and harmonious relationships. Additionally, 312 teachers at the 28 schools received agendas and raincoats for their support of different project activities.

The project benefited 7,261 school-age children (3,393 girls) and we also reached 1,911 parents (1,639 women) through various sessions.

We conducted soy-based food preparation workshops and virtual briefings with 1,484 parents (1,218 women). We also used WhatsApp to inform 512 other parents (466 mothers) in 24 communities about nutrition and health. Cargill and World Central Kitchen supported the training and delivery of materials. CARE also designed recreational and educational activities, such as cooking contests, writing children’s stories and radio broadcasts, as innovative ways to disseminate healthy eating messages. For example, 44 parents (41 mothers), participated in a “best healthy dish” contest in 14 communities; Cargill gave the winners certificates to use to pick up meat products from

the company. A total of 360 students (188 girls) participated in puppet shows in their communities and the play “The Battle of Food” in their schools. Similarly, the game “My Healthy Chalupa” was developed to reinforce nutritional knowledge of students and parents, and the story “The Big Harvest” was written and worked on in different formats (audio, coloring book and full-color storybook) for use by schoolchildren, teachers and parents to promote gardening and healthy eating.

Another strategy developed by the project in Nicaragua was a **radio soap opera campaign** (five chapters) on food and nutrition security (containing messages on food safety, handwashing, eating fruits and vegetables, etc.) that was broadcast daily during the final months of the project by three radio stations (Radio Buenisima in Tipitapa, Radio San Cristobal in Chinandega, and Radio La Consentida in Masaya), reaching approximately 52,000 people in project areas and beyond. The spots aired three times a day (morning, noon and late afternoon) from Monday to Friday, with bonuses in the morning on weekends. We also began writing the second phase of the radio soap opera, connecting elements of the regional gender strategy and project baseline/identified needs. In particular, the second phase aimed to address new masculinities; gender-based violence; self-care (anger management of men and anxiety/stress of women); healthy parenting (focused on nutrition and breaking gender stereotypes); and inclusive markets (organizing to sell production). Based on learnings from this experience in Nicaragua, our team in Honduras launched a radio campaign in February 2022 on nutrition and women’s economic empowerment, it is now complete.

For gardens, we **established a total of 28 bio-intensive school gardens** (including two vertical gardens) with the participation of 660 children (325 girls), 109 parents (66 mothers) and 59 teachers (53 women) that produced a total of 1.6 tons of cucumbers, sweet peppers, bell peppers, carrots, eggplant, tomatoes, radishes, white squash, spinach, plantains and beans. This was used to complement school meals, with an approximate value of \$1,346. Fourth, fifth and sixth grade students were organized into “eco-brigades” to take care of the gardens (e.g., cleaning the garden area, preparing the soil with organic fertilizer, sowing the seeds, irrigation and maintenance) and received group t-shirts. In addition to providing training and inputs at all schools, we installed 10 micro-irrigation systems for school gardens in Masaya, Tipitapa, Chinandega and Larreynaga, and water harvesting structures in Héctor García and Melania Lacayo schools for irrigation and hygiene activities. We also rehabilitated water harvesters at Andrés Castro, Rafaela Herrera, John Douglas and Dirita schools.

With funds from World Central Kitchen and Cargill, kitchen utensils (2,215 plates, 2,215 spoons and 1,470 cups) were delivered to 11 school canteens where children are served healthy snacks. We held a “best school garden” contest, and Cargill awarded prizes to the top two school gardens in each department. Cargill also supported the development of gardens through the delivery of 234 aromatic and medicinal plants, which were provided by Cargill volunteers and distributed at 12 schools. Lastly, 233 students (129 girls) and 18 teachers (14 women) from nine schools participated in an entrepreneurial contest/program, in alliance with the Teach a Man to Fish volunteer organization, to make piñatas and jewelry to generate income used for supporting/maintaining their schools.

The project also **established 191 family gardens** (64 in Tipitapa, 73 in Leon and 54 in Masaya), harvesting 11.7 tons of sweet peppers, cucumbers, squash, tomatoes, yucca and spinach mainly for household consumption, with a value of approximately \$7,296. As of January 2022, there were 84 “resilient” family gardens (33 in Leon, 23 in Masaya and 28 in Tipitapa) that have established seedbeds for replanting throughout the year. We also held a “best family garden” contest with the 191 families in 20 communities, with prizes awarded to 15 winners. As an incentive, 32 other participants received recognition for implementing their family gardens.

To commemorate International Day of Rural Women, World Food Day, World Handwashing Day, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Universal Children's Day and World Soil Day, the project conducted awareness raising on gender and food and nutritional security issues through multiple platforms including videos, mail, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and text messaging to reach direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project. In particular, for World Food Day, activities included the creation of murals at 28 schools; fairs promoting healthy foods with the participation of 2,319 students; puppet shows using the “Battle of Food” script in 12 schools with the participation of 170 schoolchildren (88 girls); facilitating the “My Healthy Chalupa” game with 4,208 schoolchildren (2,048 girls); and 10 students (five girls) at Rafael Herrera school participating in a fun activity (known as *Nutriliga*) to test their knowledge about nutrition and hygiene. In-person sessions were held with 91 mothers using the “My Healthy Chalupa” game. Likewise, for International Volunteer Day, boys and girls from project schools wrote messages/made artwork for 159 Cargill volunteers to acknowledge their support.

Costa Rica. The nutrition component was the most relevant part of the project in Costa Rica. Schools closed and then reopened again after a spike in COVID-19 cases from the Omicron variant. Classes restarted with the social distancing restriction decreasing from 1.8 meters to 1.5 meters. Children’s return to school favored the project’s ability to reach more through in-person discussions on health and nutrition. As teachers looked to catch up on missed classroom time with their students, we were only allowed to work with groups for a maximum of 25 minutes on each topic. Despite time constraints, **the project achieved our goal reaching 1,070 children (620 girls)**; this was the first time we were able to hold in-person workshops at schools. Topics covered were handwashing, cleaning/disinfecting fruits and vegetables, safe water consumption and physical activity.

The main success involved working with the Ministry of Public Education to **develop eight different educational materials**, of which 11,168 were given to schoolchildren, 625 to mothers, 8,383 to teachers and six to schools. The materials include a memory game for students and a learning tool based on the board game “Snakes and Ladders” to teach students about healthy habits and being physically active. Moreover, we prepared two additional books. The first is a manual for teachers on promoting topics and activities developed by the project, including cognitive activities with students on nutrition and health. The second is aimed at family members containing easy and inexpensive cooking recipes, crafts and other activities to stimulate creativity with children at home.

Educational Materials	
Total # given to schoolchildren	11,168
Total # given to family members	625
Total # given to teachers	8,383
Total given to schools	6

We also set up demonstration stands to promote healthy snacks that captured the attention of 613 family members (1,563 women and girls). Likewise, 68 parents (90% mothers) participated in six virtual workshops on breakfasts, healthy snacks, lunch and dinner options with legumes. Thirty kits were prepared and distributed to school staff members, including aprons, caps, hand cloths and facemasks. The project team also followed up on the implementation of school gardens now that schools have reopened. Two schools – Alfredo Volio School in Heredia and Enrique Pinto School in Alajuela – were the first to participate in school gardening and form committees (with teachers and parents) to oversee garden maintenance. They are about to harvest from the gardens. Lastly, with the participation of Cargill volunteers, we created audiovisual materials to present during educational sessions in schools (and potentially through community workshops) on household finances, assertive communication, emotional wellbeing, importance of physical activity, and home gardens.

In Costa Rica, the model school graduation process began in February 2022 and concluded in August 2022 with two schools. In both schools, we established committees for school snacks and gardens, and delivered teaching and learning materials to teachers.

Location	School	Total children	Total teachers	Total mothers/fathers involved in		
				Printed material	School gardens	Zoom sessions
San Rafael	Enrique Pinto	1,986	38	184	14	9
Birri	Alfredo Volio	458	33	132	8	15
Total		2,444	71	316	22	24

Change Area 5: Strategic partnerships.

Partnerships with public institutions and private organizations have been vital for effective project implementation. The purpose of CARE’s initiative is to transfer knowledge and promote sustainability of interventions, and foster co-responsibility and solidarity of organizations, companies and governments toward the most vulnerable populations in these countries. For example, in Honduras we have formal agreements with all five project municipalities; in Guatemala we have an agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to provide technical assistance; and in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, work involved direct partner implementation with Glasswing and Fabretto to carry out project activities.

Guatemala. CARE collaborated with 45 educators and field technicians from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAGA) to replicate project interventions such as promoting food and nutritional security and frequency of food consumption, reaching 2,841 people (2,578 women) in Chimaltenango and Escuintla from different groups that make up the Learning Centers for Rural Development; each group has approximately 25 families organized at the community level. In addition, we began formulating an advocacy plan with public institutions (MAGA, Ministry of Education, and Secretariat of Food and Nutritional Security) to integrate the Municipal Commissions for Food Security and coordinate with Municipal Directorates for Women. This is important to ensure the continuity of activities/replication in project communities, and to scale up best practices and lessons learned.

CARE participates in the coalition that promotes the Economic Development Law (LEYDEM), which, if approved by Congress, would benefit more than 2.5 million women in the country’s 22 departments. CARE’s role has been to provide support, facilitate processes, and strengthen the LEYDEM framework. In particular, we have helped streamline the relationship between the framework’s coordinating committee and the Women’s Caucus responsible for giving a favorable opinion before Congressional approval. These actions were carried out in close collaboration and coordination with another CARE project *Weaving Opportunities for Women’s Economic Empowerment*.

We also trained 168 people (155 women) in effective communication and advocacy through the School of Advocacy digital app. And in coordination with the Municipal Directorate of Women, we held a workshop on the history of women’s rights with the participation of 66 women from San Martin Jilotepeque.

Honduras. Initiated by CARE, the five municipalities now finance a team of 12 technicians (a \$20,410 investment) that made 1,680 technical visits over the past year to producers of basic grains, pork, tilapia and family/community gardens. The technicians advised producers on topics including weight control, feed recommendations, oxygen measurement and planting recommendations, benefiting 2,232 people (1,916 women).



As a result of the project’s advocacy efforts (and convincing by trained women), agreements were reached in November 2021 with two municipal governments (Quimistan and San Marcos) by which the municipalities will replicate the promotion of good nutrition practices and implementation of eight community gardens.

This initiative benefits the entire population of two municipalities – 77,000 people. Moreover, on March 27, 2022, the Villanueva municipality approved a gender policy that recognized the human rights, non-discrimination and empowerment of women. Based on this gender policy, the municipality made a commitment to allocate more resources to the municipal women’s office (beyond the current 5%).

And, during the final year of the project, we held three planning workshops with representatives from each of the five municipalities and the Centro de Desarrollo Empresarial del Valle de Sula (CDE) Business Development Center that supports administration, finance and legal issues within those municipalities. Discussions focused on applying a gender “new masculinities” approach and value-added products as well as target setting.

As a result of the alliance established with CDE, we created a business model and investment plan to develop the Rural Credit and Savings Bank of the El Achiotal Aquaculture Association in Santa Cruz de Yojoa. Materials were delivered to the Aquaculture Association for the construction of a tilapia collection center, benefiting 34 producers (15 women) with improved access to markets. For this, the CDE donated \$4,166, the project provided \$6,250, the Tree of Mercy Organization donated \$2,083, and tilapia producers contributed \$8,333. The municipality donated sand and the necessary environmental and construction permits. CARE also influenced the CDE to support other rural savings banks initiated by the project, in the development of their business plans and supporting nine organizations with \$28,340 in equipment and supplies including industrial stoves, kitchen kits and agriculture tools. Through Cargill’s alliance with World Central Kitchen, 33 mothers from nine schools were trained in food, hygiene and kitchen management, including zero waste methods. World Central Kitchen also donated \$30,000 for kitchen equipment at those nine schools.



Lastly, during the reporting period there has also been progress made in the design of the strategy that guides advocacy actions led by women leaders from the different project communities to **influence the access of women producers and microentrepreneurs to 5% of municipal budgets.** Likewise, CARE has actively joined a coalition of civil society organizations made up of 10 organizations, nine women’s networks and three platforms to influence compliance with the CREDIMUJER program, which would **benefit more than 2.6 million rural women by providing access to loans under appropriate conditions.** Congress already approved the act and budget, but the previous government redirected the funds

elsewhere. With a new government in place, there is an expectation that advocacy work will lead to government approval of funds and its execution earmarked for CREDIMUJER. Given the government's financial state, this decision has been postponed to 2023. The role of the project, and coalition CARE belongs to, is to bring our experience in rural women's financial inclusion to influence the process moving forward.

Nicaragua. Partnerships with public institutions and private organizations were vital for effective project implementation. The purpose of CARE's initiative was to transfer knowledge and promote sustainability of interventions, and foster co-responsibility and solidarity of organizations, companies and governments toward the most vulnerable populations.

- CARE's alliance with the National Autonomous University in León resulted in graduate students supporting the rehabilitation of tilapia ponds and research on fish feed with the cooperative in Pellizco.
- Our relationship forged with *Fundación Contra el Hambre* (Foundation Against Hunger) that began during the response to Hurricanes Eta and Iota continued with assistance to bean farmers in Versailles as well as with starting up production of watermelon and squash.
- A joint effort with the American Nicaraguan Foundation supported the food security/delivery of food packages to people affected by the pandemic.
- Colgate Palmolive donated hygiene kits for preschool and first grade students in 2021 to help combat COVID.
- The project coordinated entrepreneurship activities at nine schools with the Teach a Man to Fish organization (training of students/teachers to make pinatas and jewelry to generate income).
- Friends of Christ supported the project training on pig rearing/breeding farms.
- The Cantera Foundation supported the project during "new masculinity" workshops with 89 men.
- CARE and Fabretto's alliance with the Ministry of Education allowed for annual work planning and execution of project activities in schools.
- The project worked with the Ministry of Family, Community, Cooperatives and Associations toward legalizing credit unions.
- World Central Kitchen (and Cargill) supported training of mothers and delivery of materials/utensils to 11 schools to benefit canteens/children's snacks.
- Through coordination with radio stations in Masaya, Tipitapa and Chinandega we secured radio spots for the food and nutrition security campaign/five-part radio soap opera that aired for more than three months in 2021.
- It is important to note that no advocacy work was carried out in Nicaragua because legislation-imposed limits/more stringent measures to non-governmental organization activities.

Costa Rica. In coordination with partners, we developed around 25 information, advocacy and learning exchange events at the national level, resulting in the sensitization of actors on aspects of women's empowerment, nutrition and good eating habits. Moreover, six alliances were established with municipal governments and local stakeholders, and we worked closely with the Ministry of Public Education to develop various educational materials as well as access reopened schools for the first time to deliver in-person training to teachers and students on nutrition. In addition, students from the University of Medical Sciences contributed approximately 300 hours to support the development of materials on healthy eating for use with schoolchildren in project areas.

Project Adaptations

Guatemala. After finalizing the annual operating plan and adjusting the budget, we hired new field

personnel: two production facilitators; one micro-entrepreneurship facilitator; three food and nutrition education facilitators; and one empowerment specialist. This team was key to achieving our targets and outcomes during the final six months of this phase of the project.

Honduras. We redirected funds to ensure compliance with school targets, investing in minor repairs to toilets, kitchens, warehouses, and the establishment of model gardens in six schools. Likewise, resources were redirected for the delivery of fertilizer to 260 producers of basic grains, supporting their food security during the summer season when a prolonged drought is expected. Funds also were allocated for the design of radio spots on nutrition and economic empowerment of women.

Nicaragua. Prior to the untimely project closure in early 2022, we produced innovative tools and compelling messages that allowed for greater interaction with target groups. These included educational games, radio soap operas, audio stories and sending text messages/using WhatsApp and Zoom to reinforce content on good production practices, integrated pest management, prevention of COVID-19 and the use of digital sound devices loaded with specific content for mothers, fathers and producers who do not have mobile coverage/online access.

Costa Rica. Schools finally reopened in 2022 and we re-adapted to conduct in-person training with students. Previously, we had been using virtual training to reach teachers, parents and students during COVID-19 school closures. Moreover, the Ministry of Public Education stopped delivering food to the families of students as meals have resumed at schools. Schools also have begun delivering grades to students/families by email each quarter; this had previously been done in-person during food deliveries or by mail during which the project included printed information on nutrition/COVID-19 prevention. We also worked with school directors to deliver educational materials to students, teachers and parents.

Successes and Challenges

The main **successes** have come from raising awareness with men and women on gender and masculinity issues. The use of field trips/exchange visits also has been effective for the sharing of experiences and adoption of good practices in the management and improvement of various production activities; participants have committed to transfer the learnings from these exchange visits to other food crop, pig and tilapia producers who did not participate. Moreover, taking advantage of moments of contact with target communities when delivering supplies to give talks on healthy and nutritious food and gender equity has been effective in reaching a greater number of people with key messages. Also, CARE's alliance with municipal governments started to bear fruit in terms of budgeting to scale up and multiply impact (through the replication of activities by municipalities) in other communities not served by the project.

The main **challenge** has been COVID-19 risk management to implement project events, field visits and activities, coupled with the challenging economic conditions as a result of the pandemic as well as drought/hurricanes/climate factors. In addition, the cost of feed/inputs has significantly increased for producers and the sales price for products (particularly sorghum) is lower in the formal market than informal market, thus limiting our ability to effectively link producers to the formal market. Many schools were closed due to a spike in cases from the Omicron variant, but because of the vaccination process in the last semester, schools returned to on-site classes. Also, microentrepreneur businesses have progressively closed over the past two years since the onset of COVID-19, and it indeed has been a challenging time in Central America, particularly with the overall uncertainty of when a sense of

normalcy will return. Now there has been an emergence of monkeypox, with the first cases being reported in Guatemala and Honduras that could result in new restrictions on people’s mobility.

Human Interest Stories (the best from previous reports)

Guatemala: ‘I am a hard-working woman, cheerful, confident and willing to share’

Maria Lazara, 38, is a mother of four and pig producer in Chimaltenango. She gets up at 5 a.m. every day to plan daily activities such as feeding animals, butchering meat and weaving traditional güipiles. Maria believes it’s important to assign responsibilities to everyone in her family, practicing what she learned from the *Nourishing the Future* project about distribution of household duties without gender



discrimination. Everyone is equal in her eyes. **“I enjoy seeing my sons and daughters work and study according to what we agreed because it teaches them responsibility,”** Maria says. **“I listen to them and give them feedback to expand their capabilities.”**

Maria has participated in the project for the past two years. She likes it not only for the opportunity to learn but also because it allows women to share lessons, build trust and support each other. **“The project values us as women and it values what we do,”** she says. As the head of her household, Maria has realized the importance of generating more income to support her family. She now knows how to better feed and fatten her animals, properly manage and clean their pens, and importantly, get a fair price at the time of sale.

Honduras: ‘Never give up pursuing your dream’

Maria Rivera, 39, is married with a 2-year-old son in Santa Cruz de Yojoa. Since 2019, she has been a tilapia meat producer and member of the Aquaculture Association, where she stands out for her leadership. Maria currently serves as the cooperative’s secretary. **“I always dreamed of becoming a successful producer,”** says Maria. In agreement with her husband, they invested their savings and got a loan to finance five tilapia ponds with 30,000 fish, as well as installed a 2-kilometer pipeline to ensure proper water flow. However, after completing the pipeline, Hurricanes Eta and Iota hit. The river overflowed and flooding washed it all away. Her loss was massive, and with the resulting lack of access to fresh water, the fish did not receive enough oxygen and started dying.



“Surrounded by mud, I felt my dream was falling apart,” says Maria whose losses amounted to more than 320,000 lempiras (\$13,300). Faced with challenges, the *Nourishing the Future* project provided Maria and other community members with high-quality materials to restore the water flow. At the same time, the producers purchased fish feed to reactivate their enterprise. Overcoming the crisis, they now have eight working ponds with more than 53,000 tilapia. **“For me, the best thing is the education and training the project provides,”** she says. **“Today I know my rights and know how to manage my business and my home. I say to other women that we can do it. We can no longer remain as housewives only. We must**

step forward. If you are a single mother, fill yourself with hope and strength and show what you are made of. Do not sit there with your arms crossed. You can be an entrepreneur.”

Nicaragua. ‘I want my entire yard to be cultivated.’

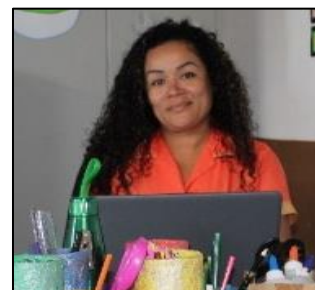
In the Quebrada Honda community, four neighbors – Jenny, Elsa, Josmary and Eymy – have used their training in *Nourishing the Future* to create thriving family gardens. In their backyards, they grow enough nutritious vegetables to feed their own families, earn income and contribute to the school lunch program. They also routinely share their harvest – and their knowledge – with their neighbors. With the support and follow-up of CARE staff, they have learned about rotating crops, saving the best fruits and vegetables to create seedbeds, and fighting pests with live barriers and aromatic plants. “I feel ready to experiment with other crops,” Jenny said.



Elsa and Josmary’s garden is only a few steps from Jenny’s house. “We went from buying peppers to harvesting them on our patio,” Elsa said. They have even created an irrigation system. Nearby, Eymy makes the most of every inch in her yard, growing enough tomatoes and bell peppers to sell for income and to contribute to the school meal program. “We save seeds from the best that is harvested and make seedbeds that we use ourselves and share with other people in the community,” she said.

Costa Rica. ‘Making learning fun and effective.’

Karla López González teaches Education for Daily Life at the La California School in Río Segundo de Alajuela. The topics covered in the *Nourishing the Future* project complement her teaching and have a direct impact on her students’ lives. “For example, something as simple as handwashing in these times of pandemic is super essential,” she said. “The way that topics are covered in the project is very effective. Written lessons almost always bore children, so ***when learning is more dynamic – when it incorporates play – children like it more, they have fun, and they understand better.***”



Conclusion

CARE’s work has been critical in supporting recovery strategies as people throughout Central America face COVID-19, social and economic challenges. The technological adaptation, the design and development of new ways of conducting virtual/in-person training, and the support provided to producers, microentrepreneurs, schoolchildren, their parents and teachers have allowed CARE to continue to be a valuable partner for improving the living conditions of families in targeted communities. Furthermore, working with Cargill and other public and private organizations allowed the project to continuously support the empowerment/decision-making skills of women and promotion of shared household responsibility. Despite ongoing adverse conditions, CARE’s country teams (aside from in Nicaragua where the project closed early) worked diligently to meet our targets and goals.

The project contributed to several significant positive impacts and mitigated negative impacts pertaining to food insecurity and nutrition. The negative effects of shocks faced by project participants (a pandemic, economic crisis and two hurricanes) would have been far worse had we not carried out targeted recovery support activities.

Cargill Engagement

Date	Cargill Participants	CARE Participants	Meeting Objectives	Meeting Results
Regional				
Monthly meetings	Liliana Barahona, Angie Céspedes and Ana Zabala	Sonia Cano, Edgar Medina, Rigoberto Berrios, Paola Gonzales and Laura Zequeira	Discuss and assess progress in each country and upcoming plans.	Shared best practices in each country; discussed challenges; and identified activities for Cargill volunteers.
Guatemala				
Oct. 25, 2021	Alexza Lezema and Pablo Castrillo	María Odilia Tax	Discuss the construction of infrastructure for the vegetable nursery at the Perry plant.	Provided structure design and quoted greenhouse infrastructure costs.
Oct. 25, 2021	8 Perry and 2 Purina volunteers	Maria Odilia Tax, Jenny Ixcaquic and Isabel Bal	Developed volunteer activities for World Food Day.	Volunteers delivered food dishes to 300 families from two school communities.
Honduras				
Monthly calls with Cargill	Liliana Barahona, Angie Céspedes and Ana Zabala	Sonia Cano, Edgar Medina, Rigoberto Berrios and Diana Sagastume	Discuss progress by goals achieved and main actions for the following month.	Shared activities conducted and received recommendations from Cargill. Also discussed work in other countries.
Nicaragua				
Oct. 17, 2021	Ana Zavala	Project team	Discuss project progress.	Scheduled a meeting with animal nutrition coordinators and discussed school/family gardens.
Four meetings between Jan. 13-25, 2022	Ana Zavala and Lisette Urey	Dr. Rigoberto Berrios and Jessie Ampié	Discuss “Back to School with Cargill” for 2022	Reviewed/finalized contents of school kits (for students/teachers), budget approval, match funds request and campaign scope.
Costa Rica				
Three meetings in August 2021	Angie Céspedes	Tamara Zúñiga, Luana González and Noelia Vargas	Discuss memory game, snakes and ladders game and production of books.	Discussed production schedule and price of the educational materials for children, family members and teachers.
Aug. 3, 2021	Angie Céspedes	Laura Sequeira, Tamara Zúñiga, Luana González and Noelia Vargas	Discussed training topics for Cargill volunteers.	Topics discussed included home finances and importance of promoting physical activity.

Aug.13, 2021	Angie Céspedes	Luana González and Noelia Vargas	Delivery of books for family members at Alfredo Volion and San Antonio del Tejar schools.	Delivered books containing cooking recipes, crafts and fun activities parents can do with children at home.
Aug. 27, 2021	Angie Céspedes	Tamara Zúñiga, Luana González and Noelia Vargas	Delivery of the teachers manual to San Antonio del Tejar school.	The manuals delivered contain all activities/topics from project workshops.
Sept. 24, 2021	Angie Céspedes	Tamara Zúñiga, Luana González and Noelia Vargas	Delivery of kits to school canteen staff at San Antonio del Tejar school.	Delivered kits contain aprons, caps, handcloths and facemasks.
Oct. 19, 2021	Angie Céspedes	Laura Sequeira	Review project educational sessions conducted in 2021 school year.	Reviewed/closed sessions in six schools.
Nov. 16, 2021	Angie Céspedes	Laura Sequeira	Delivered books to family members at Julia Fernandez and La California schools.	Books contained cooking recipes, crafts and fun activities.
Nov. 26, 2021	Angie Céspedes	Luana González and Noelia Vargas	Interaction with family members during virtual/in-person workshops	Held six workshops on healthy cooking.
Dec. 17, 2021	Angie Céspedes	Tamara Zúñiga, Luana González and Noelia Vargas	Monthly call on project activities.	Discussions held with Cargill, CARE and Glasswing.
Jan. 11, 2022	Angie Céspedes	Tamara Zúñiga, Luana González and Noelia Vargas	Review “Back to School with Cargill” activity.	Discussed activity and school kit budget; activity planned for March 2022.

Indonesia

Project Name: PROSPER II – School Sanitation

Project Location: Serang and Bone Districts

Project Period: September 2019 – August 2022

Reporting Period: Final Report

Gift Amount: \$902,713

CARE Contacts: Dr. Maria Hinson Tobin



Executive Summary

The PROSPER II project in Indonesia, despite COVID-19 setbacks, was able to reach the goal of enhancing the well-being of children through the reduction of diarrhea and infectious diseases, and by improving awareness of and access to nutritious food in **10 selected elementary schools (four in Serang and six in Bone) and surrounding communities**. Due to COVID-19, schools were closed for nearly a year and a half, affecting 40 million students. The pandemic impacted household food security, especially for the most marginalized, and limited the accessibility, availability, affordability and sustainability of healthy food items. In September 2021, the government started to allow for 50% in-person learning in schools and 50% online, making it possible for CARE to carry out activities at schools, including the little doctor approach, nutrition gardens and vaccine awareness. CARE also completed construction of 10 toilet facilities at the schools, benefiting **3,528 students, teachers and school community members directly (1,776 women and girls) and 13,778 family members indirectly (7,105 women and girls) through the promotion of healthy behaviors**. Moreover, we held direct coordination meetings with local governments, resulting in the government of Bone adopting the project’s little doctor approach in 38 community health centers and 200 schools outside of PROSPER II areas, expecting to reach approximately 20,000 students (8,000 girls) indirectly. The Serang government replicated the PROSPER approach in 80 elementary schools (including four schools in 2022), allocating \$650,000 between 2018-2022 for that expansion.



The proportion of students reporting absenteeism due to diarrhea decreased three-fold.

In July 2022, just before the project ended, schools were finally allowed to fully open if they met government conditions/checklists, including having enough handwashing stations, regularly disinfecting the premises and using digital thermometers to check temperatures. **PROSPER II played a significant role in schools**

meeting the requirements to reopen, particularly the availability of sanitation and hygiene facilities, and education on clean and healthy behaviors such as handwashing with soap as a preventative action for COVID-19 transmission. Overall, since the onset, there have been 6.4 million cases of COVID-19 and 158,000 deaths in Indonesia; about 62% of the population is fully vaccinated. The project baseline study was completed in both districts in November 2020 and endline in July 2022 (see highlights below).

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

- The percentage of students reporting school absenteeism due to diarrhea in the last two weeks fell from 8.8% at baseline to 2.4% at endline.
- The percentage of students reporting having diarrhea in the last two weeks dropped from 6.2% at baseline to 4.3% at endline.
- Target schools now have 100% functioning latrines (existing and new toilets), compared to 80% at baseline. The latrine ratio (1:40 for boys/1:38 for girls) far outweighs the government standard (1:60 for boys/1:50 for girls).
- Nearly all latrines (99.6%) have nearby and functional handwashing facilities, a 19.6% increase from baseline (80%).
- The percentage of students reporting handwashing at school increased 91.8% at baseline to 99.6% at endline.
- The percentage of students reporting fruit and vegetable consumption increased by 10.1% and 5.6%, respectively, between baseline and endline.

Project Achievements

Since project inception in September 2019, PROSPER II has reached **3,528 people directly (1,776 women and girls) and 13,778 people indirectly (7,105 women and girls), exceeding our target** (see table below). Our target was to reach 3,486 people directly (1,932 women/girls and 1,554 men/boys), including teachers, parents, students, and community members, and 10,800 people indirectly (5,400 women/girls and 5,400 men/boys). By the end of the project, we achieved **102% of the direct target and 128% of the indirect target** (primarily as a result of adjusting the Year 3 workplan for a wider advocacy strategy).

KPI	Direct Reach	Direct Reach (Women)	Direct Reach (Men)	Indirect Reach	Indirect Reach (Women)	Indirect Reach (Men)	Total Direct & Indirect Reach (Women)	Total Direct & Indirect Reach
# of people reached	3,528	1,776	1,752	13,778	7,105	6,673	8,881	17,306
# of people reached with nutrition interventions	1,407	849	558	5,628	3,396	2,232	4,245	7,035

Note: The number of women/girl participants reached is slightly lower than the target because there were more men than initially predicted in the target groups (local government officials, teachers, students, community members/leaders). Moreover, we initially planned to train 100% women canteen workers; however, we also invited men canteen workers as they also are key actors in supporting nutrition at schools.

KPI	Total
# of WASH and nutrition committees established	10

# of toilets/sanitation facilities completed at schools	10
# of child protection committees established	7

Change Area 1: Capacity building of government and NGOs.

Prior to implementing the project, we secured written agreements with the local government in Serang in November 2019 (quickly, based on good previous relationship) and in Bone in June 2020 (a new district, following two planning meetings attended by 36 officials from the Education Office, Health Office, Women’s Empowerment Office and Regional Planning Agency). Two working groups with 59 members (23 women) were established, one in each district, to serve as a platform for coordination, collaboration with and among governments, as well as for obtaining feedback. Based on criteria (e.g., elementary school, minimum of 250 students, inadequate sanitation, within a 10-kilometer radius from Cargill factories in both districts, etc.), we surveyed 29 recommended schools with local governments and Cargill and selected 10 for PROSPER II (four in Serang out of 11 recommended and six in Bone out of 18 recommended). This was followed by “kick off” events in Serang (pre-COVID) and in Bone (online).



Project kick-off meeting in Serang district.

We developed manuals on construction/rehabilitation of sanitation facilities, for clean and healthy behaviors and for nutrition guidance as well as developed and distributed a healthy canteen (kitchen) guidebook with inputs from school authorities. The manual takes into consideration the schools’ experiences in running a canteen, challenges faced and how to handle those challenges. It also includes relevant government (legal) policies and the government’s role in supporting schools. For example, in Bone, the District Office of Food Security committed to assist school canteens by providing training on how to garden and grow healthy food from local plants.

In addition, local government representatives, CARE and Cargill made joint monitoring visits to PROSPER I schools in Serang and Makassar and ensure their upkeep. These schools received support from PROSPER I in developing a clean water source only, without construction of toilets. As a result of advocacy led by the schools, \$12,000 in village funds were mobilized to build toilets and handwashing facilities. During the monitoring visits, we found that all sanitation facilities were in good condition and functioning well. Some walls and ceilings needed cleaning, however, the schools committed to clean them. The schools still conduct little doctor and nutrition training, but some activities were not possible during COVID school closures. We introduced and shared the revised little doctor training module so they could adapt/conduct the training online. Overall, there has been a new cohort of trained little doctors, and, in Makassar, the schools still organize “fruit day” every Friday to encourage students to eat fruit to improve their nutrition.

In mid-2021, given the uncertainty of when schools would reopen and the limited time for extracurricular activities during the pandemic, the little doctor module was unpacked and delivered to students using blended online and offline learning sessions (utilizing revised modules and related materials). Several materials were combined, but all the content on hygiene and healthy living behaviors were covered. COVID-19 prevention messages (e.g., proper handwashing and maintaining social distancing) also were incorporated within those materials. For the online

training and learning sessions, child-friendly materials were prepared in the form of short videos. For offline sessions, the activity was limited to a smaller number of children, particularly for a peer-to-peer or group activity, to adhere to strict COVID-19 protocols. The goal of the little doctor multiplier approach, was for 150 identified students (71 girls) to share their knowledge with at least five of their friends/classmates, thus reaching around 750 children (*further explained under Change Area 3*). Overall, this effort (and materials provided) helped develop the knowledge and skills of students around hygiene/healthy living and in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Serang district government is continuing its commitment to replicate PROSPER activities with other schools outside the project scope. For the 2022 fiscal year the government budgeted again for replication at four schools. In total, the Serang government has replicated the PROSPER approach in 80 schools in the district since 2018 (during/after PROSPER I). The total amount contributed by the Serang government since 2018 is about \$650,000. Moreover, the Bone government committed to using little doctor modules in 38 community health centers and 200 schools. To support this, 35 local government representatives (23 women) in Bone were trained by CARE as “master trainers” for activities including construction, nutrition, healthy behaviors and child protection and prevention of sexual harassment. The Bone government is responsible for all logistics needed for the training such as venue, participant transportation and other direct costs. As a result, we expect an increase in awareness of clean and healthy behaviors in non-PROSPER II schools in that district, and ultimately improvements in the health status of students across Bone. Note that the PROSPER II baseline and endline studies did not cover these replication schools, therefore data is not available.

The Serang government has replicated the PROSPER approach in 80 schools since 2018, investing \$650,000 for that expansion.

Change Area 2: Access to WASH facilities.

The 10 project schools (four in Serang and six in Bone) now have new sanitation facilities, with clean and safe girl-friendly toilets. The construction was completed in Serang in July 2021 and in Bone in January 2022. National policy allowed for sanitation construction during the pandemic, as a preparation and requirement for re-opening. Prior to construction, we created and trained a WASH and nutrition committee at each school, with a total of 62 members (29 women), including parents, teachers and principals, exceeding our target of 50 members. Based on trainings, these committees oversaw construction of sanitation facilities and will maintain them. Also, during the final year of the project, the PROSPER II team provided additional training to 55 representatives (30 women) from PROSPER II schools in Serang and Bone on the operation and maintenance of sanitation facilities. Similarly, 29 teachers (18 women) and 76 students (49 girls) from four replication schools in Serang were trained on maintaining the toilets that were provided by the government in 2020.

Note that the government standard for the toilet ratio in schools is 1:60 for boys and 1:50 for girls. The ratio for the 10 PROSPER II schools – at 1:40 for boys/1:38 for girls – is significantly better than the standard (and baseline at 1:57 aggregate). All toilet facilities for children were designed by taking into account age range, height and reach of children, which applied to sinks, door handles, faucets and size of the toilets. Nearly all latrines (99.6%) have nearby and functional handwashing facilities, a 19.6% increase from baseline (80%). Furthermore, the toilet design also considered the environmental health aspects by developing proper septic tanks, so the wastewater does not affect nearby water sources and groundwater.



Before and After: The school toilet at Matampawalie in Bone district.

For school canteen (kitchen) construction, all activities were completed in March 2022. This involved fully renovating 10 school canteens (six in Bone and four in Serang), achieving our target number. Key aspects considered were proper air circulation, lighting and building safety for children. For example, the floor must be flat, not bumpy, and always dry to reduce potential accidents.

The formal inauguration and handover of sanitation and canteen facilities in Bone was done by CARE, Cargill and the Governor of South Sulawesi. Similarly, in Serang, the inauguration was attended by several heads of government and representatives from Cargill and CARE.



Before and After: The school canteen at Cibereum in Bone district.

Change Area 3: Improved hygiene practices for elementary students and community members.

We finalized the little doctor module and related learning materials and tested the application of the module with teachers and students/little doctors. In addition to building the skills of little doctors to implement clean and healthy behaviors, the module also focuses on parental involvement, child protection, and prevention of COVID-19. The method for delivering the little doctor training was a hybrid of in-person and online learning (in response to challenges/obstacles teachers and students faced with remote learning such as connectivity issues and lack of laptops). With those revisions, we conducted the **training-of-trainers with 32 participants** (teachers and community health center representatives) (22 women) on the little doctor approach, covering health and nutrition subjects as well as how to use online learning tools such as Zoom, Google classroom and WhatsApp. This exceeded our target of 24 trainers (12 women). Overall, through the little doctor approach (commencing with students in February 2022), we engaged children to actively educate their classmates on healthy

behaviors and oversee the cleanliness of schools, including organizing related events and competitions. At each school, a WASH and nutrition committee member was selected as the person in charge of this area, coordinating with teachers, students and school community members.

The little doctor training was provided to 150 students (71 girls and 79 boys) who are in the third, fourth and fifth grades.

After gaining knowledge and skills related to clean and healthy behaviors, the little doctors successfully conveyed it to at least five peers so they would become agents of change to create a healthier environment for them (reaching around 750 classmates/family members). Prior to starting little doctor training, we held meetings with parents to discuss child protection issues.

Overall, from pre/post training surveys, 58% of parents in PROSPER II schools realized that violence committed against children (physical and emotional) had an impact on their development. At the end of such sessions, all parents/participants committed to ending violence.



Teachers and students testing the adapted little doctor module.

We also held multiple workshops/meetings with school headmasters, teachers, parents, the District Education Office, the District Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection office, village governments and sub-district governments to discuss our shared concerns and understanding about the importance of promoting child rights and protection, particularly during COVID-19 when students/children were at home more with parents. According to one village leader, *“Before PROSPER II delivered activities like training on child protection, our community used to be closed-minded in discussing cases of violence against children. Today, we are handling such cases and encouraging the community to prevent violence.”*

To promote healthy behavior to the wider community, as part of Global Handwashing Day (celebrated every October 15), we organized an online event in 2020 (via a Twibbon website campaign) to raise public awareness on the importance of handwashing with soap, reaching 766 participants (375 women/391 men) in Serang, Bone and Makassar, including participation from the schools and government partners. Continuing the project’s commitment to replication in Serang, we conducted a training-of-trainers with 30 representatives (21 women) from 14 replication schools on clean and healthy behaviors like handwashing and regular exercising that can be applied at those schools. And, in 2021, we conducted a poster drawing contest in Serang with 68 participants (22 girls). Following COVID protocols, we invited 10 finalists (eight girls) to a judging ceremony with the local government and Cargill. In Bone, we celebrated the event with a competition for students to build simple, yet



A poster from the 2021 Global Handwashing Day.

functional handwashing stations. Such events are organized each year because handwashing is a key topic the project promotes, and to connect communities to larger global activities/events.

The above activities helped in achieving the PROSPER II objective of improved hygiene practices among elementary school students and community members. For example, 99.6% of students reported regular handwashing at school, against the 95% target and 91.8% baseline. Secondly, 99.2% of students used soap while handwashing at schools against the 75% target and 96% baseline. Thirdly, the understanding of students on safe water for drinking improved from 59% at baseline to 86% at endline.

PROSPER II contributed to improved hygiene practices among school students, with 99.6% of students reporting regular handwashing at school, compared to 91.8% baseline.

Lastly, teachers are now a significant source of information for students about puberty (including menstruation hygiene), with 43% of girls and boys (same for both genders) considering their teacher as the primary source, compared to less than 2% at baseline. The project has been highly appreciated by government officers and schools for raising awareness of these issues as early as possible with students so they can better manage their personal hygiene. Moreover, headmasters at PROSPER II schools committed to continuing these activities on their own moving forward to reduce diarrheal diseases and absenteeism.

From the final evaluation on the little doctor approach, non-little doctor students said that the program's existence benefited the entire school community. According to 32% of students, little doctors were essential in providing information about the importance of handwashing with soap during a pandemic. This most likely would have been higher if we were able to start little doctor training in 2020 instead of 2022, due to COVID restrictions/school closures. And 28% said that the little doctors disseminated information about diarrheal disease and how to prevent it. Teachers also shared that those little doctors brought great benefits for the school community, because they conducted peer campaigns about personal hygiene, healthy food consumption, and how to keep the school environment clean. On a personal level, teachers commented that being selected as a little doctor improved students' self-esteem. The communications skills of little doctors also improved as they transferred key messages to peers and family members.

Change Area 4: Students and communities make healthier food choices.

Firstly, we held workshops to review the healthy school canteen guidelines in Serang and Bone, with the participation of resource staff members from the local government in each district, provincial level (Bone) and national Ministry of Health (Serang). Secondly, despite the COVID-19 situation and delays, we held a training-of-trainers workshop on nutrition with 27 participants (21 women) from PROSPER II schools in Serang and Bone as well as 46 participants (35 women) from replication schools in Serang. The training primarily focused on the provision of safe and healthy food at schools, as well as properly maintaining canteens. As follow-up to the training-of-trainers, 418 people (348 women), including parents, community members (linked to community health center nutrition groups) and canteen workers, were trained on the same topics.

Thirdly, during the final year we conducted school gardening training in four schools in Serang and Bone with 100 participants (70 women). The aim of the training was to increase the understanding and knowledge of parents, teachers and the community around the schools about how to plant and grow nutritious crops both at school and home to ensure access to healthy food for their children. The crops in the demonstration gardens included tomatoes, spinach, eggplant, chili and kale. We also created a WhatsApp group for the participants, including trainers, so they can share their progress and ask

questions, which is ongoing. The project team visited the gardens after two weeks, providing maintenance tips on optimal plant growth/pest control and reinforcing messages about the overall benefits of vegetables. We returned at harvest time, with support from village-level agriculture offices, to monitor the harvest results and provide suggestions for the allocation of the harvest. Discussions for the allocation included how much to support the school canteen, how much to sell and how much would be consumed by the groups that manage the school gardens. The biggest success was in Bone district, where they have formed garden management teams and harvested several times. Overall, the project aimed to incorporate school gardening activities in all 10 PROSPER II schools but due to COVID restrictions and time constraints we were limited to four schools.



Teachers and students harvesting from their school garden in Lalebata in Bone district.

PROSPER II targeted at least 90% of students to consume fruit and vegetables at least once a day. In terms of access to healthier foods, based on baseline study, 40.7% of students consumed fruits and 81.4% of students consumed vegetables at least once a day. At the endline, 50.8% students (47% boys/54.6% girls) consumed fruits, which is 10.1% higher than baseline data but still far from the project target. Regarding vegetable consumption at endline, 87% students (91.8% boys/81.5% girls) consumed vegetables at least once a day, which is 5.6% higher than baseline but slightly lower than target of 90%. **On average, students' fruit and vegetable consumption are relatively high compared to the baseline, with a comparison of 45.75% and 68.9% (see table below).**

	Percentage		
	Fruits	Vegetables	Overall
Baseline	40.7%	81.4%	45.75%
Endline	50.8%	87%	68.9%

Despite these results that are higher than baseline, the endline found that only 30.8% of parents provided vegetables for family members three times or more a day and 8.7% provided at least twice a day. Similarly, only 9.5% parents provide fruits three times or more a day, 20.2% twice a day, 21.3% once a day and 47.8% not every day (sometimes). Knowing this result, it is understood why students' access to fruits and vegetables can still be improved, especially from the parents/family side. However, given the observed increase in consumption – despite low reported levels of fruit and vegetable provision by parents – the data suggests that the school canteen and food vendors surrounding the school (which were mostly closed during the pandemic and children were at home for prolonged periods) can play a critical role in providing healthy food choices moving forward. It is important to note that parents were involved in several nutrition-related activities such as nutrition training and gardens. However, this gardening training was only done once (due to delay from COVID restrictions) and wasn't sufficient to trigger parental awareness and response, as observed in the results of the endline survey.

One achievement of note for this change area is that a PROSPER I school in Serang (SDN Cikande 1) was asked by the Ministry of Education to create a video on running a healthy canteen during the COVID-19 pandemic. The subjects related to safe and healthy food and healthy canteens were included in this [video](#), which was shared widely by the Ministry to help schools prepare for re-opening.

Change Area 5: Women empowered to lead WASH committees.

The outcome for this change area was to empower women who then participate and lead WASH committees, live in healthy households and can enhance their economic well-being. The first activity involved training 45 canteen managers and traders (37 women) on financial literacy, networking for marketing (business skills) as well as increasing the quality of their food products. The overall goal of this training was to increase women’s knowledge and leadership around WASH practices, including healthy and standardized food safety. Unfortunately, we were not able to monitor the increase in their income after the training because even though schools were open for 50% in-person student learning, canteen operations were still restricted. The project was about to end when canteens were allowed to finally open in July 2022. However, informally, CARE has heard from some schools (Lalebata, Watang Palakka and Cibeureum) that their income has increased since the schools and canteens fully opened.

Secondly, the project conducted a gender training with 51 WASH and nutrition committee members (31 women) in Serang and Bone, discussing how to create gender balance at schools and prevent sexual harassment. As the follow up action, a workshop was held with 41 school representatives (21 women) in both districts about developing policies around preventing sexual harassment and abuse at schools as well as building a network for community-based child protection. Additional activities related to child protection are elaborated in Change Area 6 below.

Lastly, as part of empowering women (and based on the interest of mothers and other community members when participating in the school gardening), the project team met with local governments/village authorities to discuss the possibility of families and communities adopting the gardening approach. The local governments/village authorities showed interest in supporting the activity in the future. Ultimately, having a family or community garden would reduce household expenses because they would produce and not have to buy some food ingredients. This savings could be used for other purposes like supporting educational costs. Additional outreach/follow-up is needed to encourage and develop the family/community approach.



Based on the success of the four school gardens in the final year of the project, families are motivated to start their own gardens at home.

Change Area 6: Implementing a holistic approach for linking schools and communities to realize child protection.

We initiated advocacy activities to influence systems and policies around child protection. Together with PROSPER II local partners Yayasan Pemerhati Social Indonesia in Serang and Yayasan Perempuan

Beskar in Bone, in February 2022 the project team conducted an assessment on child protection and the impact we've had with school-based interventions. The respondents included village leaders and school representatives. The main finding from this assessment was there still is a lack of understanding from various parties at the village level regarding comprehensive child development and the issue of child protection. Children still face problems such as neglect, violence (physical or psychological), child labor, child marriage, and dropping out of school. There is no forum/policy/program that can be accessed if there are cases that happen to children. At the school level, there are no specific policies for child protection and prevention of violence, indicating that the situation is not yet optimal for the comprehensive growth of children and this bleeds into the family/community environment.

From the assessment results, CARE and our two local partners developed a holistic approach for child protection, combining physical and non-physical needs of children through the collaborative involvement of all relevant stakeholders. The physical needs were addressed through the provision of improved sanitation, hygiene, food and nutrition necessities. The non-physical needs were addressed through a campaign on child rights and protection against fear, exploitation and abuse. The stakeholders involved are families (school parents), schools (teachers and students), communities surrounding the schools, village leaders and local authorities (district offices of education, health, women's empowerment, development planning, and public works).

To further set the stage and ensure child rights and protection are implemented in schools, we **established seven community-based child protection forums** (four in Serang and three in Bone) and trained 153 members (68 women). Note that the number of women members is lower than men because, at present, there are more men in leadership roles in the community (e.g., village heads, heads of religious groups, etc.). The women we did identify and include in these forums are from local women's groups and parent-teacher associations. The role of these forums is to prevent any type of harassment of children, and they are linked to the national referral system. If harassment still happens, they will collectively discuss and address it with an appropriate action. In addition to organizing/training forum members, the project **conducted training on child protection with 104 community members** (43 women). These community members have become "agents," tasked with preventing the violation of child rights, starting with their own family. These stakeholders will take the child protection initiative forward after the project ends.

PROSPER II Sustainability

The PROSPER II team initiated inter-sectoral meetings to integrate our interventions as part of developing a sustainability roadmap. We have identified two existing government-supported programs as potential vehicles to integrate and sustain the PROSPER II approach.

- For **school-based interventions**, the model could be integrated into the existing *Usaha Kesehatan Sekolah* or UKS (School Health Program) which is a mandatory subject in all schools in Indonesia. In fact, PROSPER II activities had been delivered using the UKS learning schedule in the 10 schools. Two lead sectors, Education and Health, will be the primary agencies to review the integration of the model into the UKS. At the end of PROSPER II, the project completed the establishment of the UKS implementation team at four schools in Serang, as well as facilitated the establishment of the UKS coaching team. In Bone, they already have a district-level UKS implementation team and a coaching team. This institutionalization aspect is one of the requirements to ensure the success of the integration of PROSPER II approach into UKS programming. In the next phase, CARE will continue to work closely with the local government to develop the integrated module, test it at the school level and, in tandem,

conduct advocacy activities to ensure that this integration will be formally adopted, with appropriate budgets.

- For the **holistic approach for child development and protection**, two program under the Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection Agency have been identified: Child Friendly Schools and the Village-Based Child Protection Forum. The latter does not always exist in villages due to lack of awareness, resources and capacity at the community level. Through the current phase’s piloting, CARE designed a more practical and affordable approach that will enable communities and schools to jointly engage in overseeing the needs and protection of children, including the consistent provision of health needs as introduced in the pilot schools. The Education and Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection agencies will be taking the lead on the integration of the holistic approach. At the end of the PROSPER II, together with village leaders, members of community-based child protection forums, local government agencies, as well as PROSPER II local partners in Serang and Bone, we completed the drafting of an integrative and holistic child protection mechanism that can be used by multiple stakeholders. In the next phase, this mechanism will be introduced to the local government and prepared for the integration into an existing government program such as Child-Friendly Schools and Village-based Child Protection Forums. We intend to test this approach in Serang and Bone as part of PROSPER III.

Project Adaptations

The PROSPER II team incorporated changes in project implementation to adapt to the COVID-19 situation. These included:

- Conducting virtual coordination meetings and assessments with local governments.
- Establishing WhatsApp groups to follow up with school gardening training and little doctor training.
- Adapting little doctor training to a hybrid in-person/online model to deal with ongoing uncertainties from the pandemic/future COVID waves that could potentially close schools again.
- Adding in messages on COVID prevention measures during healthy behavior training sessions with teachers, parents and community members in Serang and Bone.
- Holding discussions with community members in Bone on the importance of getting vaccinated. The participants included parents and teachers of PROSPER II schools as well as 120 participants from six surrounding villages.

Successes and Challenges

The main **success** centered around the completion of sanitation facilities and canteens at the 10 schools in Serang and Bone. As reflected in the endline results, the percentage of students being absent from school due to diarrhea fell from 8.8% to 2.4%. Moreover, we secured the commitment of the Bone government to adopt the little doctor approach in 38 community health centers and 200 non-PROSPER schools – impacting at least 20,000 students (8,000 girls) in that district (preparation work/coordination meetings have been done, and 35 local government representatives were trained as master trainers). Overall, PROSPER II received very positive response by local governments in Serang and Bone. They agreed that this model is needed to ensure the comprehensive development of children – at schools, home and in their communities. According to Ambo Dalle, the Vice-Regent of Bone district, *“PROSPER provided examples for improving health and education to advance the human development index. The next task of the local government is to imitate and incorporate it into our own regional planning.”*

The main **challenge** was COVID-19, which affected all sectors of life. For this reason, CARE shifted many training and meeting activities to online and revised/added materials related to COVID-19 prevention

and vaccination to existing materials related to little doctors, nutrition, construction and canteen management. Overall, we sought to ensure that the COVID-19 situation was properly managed at schools and in communities, and that people got fully vaccinated. During COVID-19 school closures, we found that many students and teachers faced connectivity issues, lack of devices (if they had devices) and not being fluent enough in operating them for virtual learning. Learning from this situation, for little doctors as example, we shifted to a hybrid in-person/online method for students and added the “how to use the online learning method” subject into the training curriculum for teachers.

In addition, during school closures, gardens were voluntarily managed by teachers and parents. While they understood about planting, they faced obstacles in keeping vegetables free from pests. In response, we collaborated with village-level agriculture offices to assist schools in monitoring the development of plants, including assistance for pest control and prevention. Another challenge was that village authorities were open to supporting child protection activities but lacked understanding about the right type of strategy to apply. In turn, together with two local partners, we provided training on child protection issues, discussed options for child protection in their villages, established seven community-based child protection forums, and further trained 104 community members to become village agents for child rights.

Human Interest Stories

Meet Meny. The supervision of sanitation infrastructure and maintenance is traditionally done by men. However, breaking new ground, **Meny** is now a member of the WASH and nutrition committee in Watang Palakka in Bone district. In her role, Meny is helping support the provision of clean water and sanitation facilities at the school and community. *“I am very happy to become a member of the sanitation committee,” Meny says. “It’s not only for the school. I can also use the knowledge I’ve gained at home and in my neighborhood.”*



Meet Mudjid. Finding a toilet to use is often a problem for school children and their families. One student admits that open defecation was once a common practice. **Mudjid**, now a sixth grader at a PROSPER I school in Serang remembers back two years ago when the project constructed latrines at his school. *“I was so happy to have a place to defecate at school instead of having to go to the house next door,” he says. “At home, we used to defecate around the trees behind our house and it smelled so bad. After learning about hygiene and proper toilets, I asked my parents to make a latrine at home and they did. Having a toilet at school and at home makes us healthier.”*

Meet Bu lin. Providing remote learning was a huge challenge for teachers during the pandemic.

According to **Bu lin**, a teacher at Pasir Buyut Elementary School in Serang, *“We’ve struggled to ensure students continue to receive lessons because not all of them have access to adequate technology to study online.”* Of the 30 students in her class, only eight have cell phones that can be used to study. As a result, Bu lin goes to her students’ homes and has formed smaller-sized study groups. *“We teachers cannot give up on our students.”* she says. Through PROSPER training, Bu lin learned about the status of malnutrition and stunting in their school communities and ways to combat it. By understanding the problem and solution, she incorporates discussions on health and nutritious food as well as COVID-19 prevention during study group sessions. Bu line says she has noticed a positive change in her students’ behavior. *“They are now diligent in washing their hands with soap, eating properly and throwing garbage in the right bins.”*



Conclusion

Despite COVID school closures for approximately half of the project, we were able to adapt to complete the construction of latrines and canteens at 10 schools as well as modify and implement the little doctor approach and nutrition/healthy eating activities. Moreover, through advocacy actions, local governments are now investing in PROSPER II activities to have a larger impact in Serang and Bone districts. As always, we thank Cargill for supporting this important work in Indonesia.

Cargill Engagement (final year)

Date	Cargill Participants	CARE Participants	Meeting Objectives	Meeting Results
Nov. 4, 2021	Mita and Fadhly	Lola Amelia, Ati Sumaiti, Pungky, Desi, Billy and Yusmaidy	Global Handwashing Day event	Judging and announcing winners of handwashing drawing competition.
Nov. 19-20, 2021	Lullung Langi	Lola Amelia, Evelin, Maqvira, Lidya and Idhan	Joint monitoring of PROSPER I schools in Makassar	Observed sanitation facilities in 10 schools in Makassar City.
Dec. 13-14, 2021	Agung Baskoro, Narto Adji and Ibrahim	Ati Sumiati, Yusmaidy, Billy, Pungky, Christanti and Lola Amelia	Joint monitoring of PROSPER I schools in Serang	Observed sanitation facilities in five schools in Serang.
Dec. 15, 2021	Narto Adji	Lola Amelia, Ati Sumiati, Pungky, Billy and Yusmaidy	Training canteen managers	Increased knowledge of healthy food and standards.
Jan. 27, 2022	Narto Adji	Lola Amelia, Agus Slamet Prihadi, Wisnu, Ati Sumiati, Pungky, Billy and Yusmaidy	Coordination meeting with district government in Serang	Provided update on PROSPER II progress.
May 18, 2022	Taryn Barclay and Agung	Maria Hinson, Rosa Tesfai, Elly Kaganzi	Project call with Cargill	Provided update on implementation

	Baskoro	and Lola Amelia		progress.
June 22, 2022	Narto Adji, Ibrahim and Firmansyah	Luki Kurniawan, Lola Amelia, Pungky Desi, Yusmaidy, Ati Sumiati and Jhon Billy.	Inauguration of sanitation facilities and canteens	Completed inauguration with facilities being used by schools.

Stakeholder Engagement

Serang

- Sanitation facilities in elementary schools in Serang (August 20, 2021)
<https://dindikbud.serangkab.go.id/baca/berita/pembangunan-sanitasi-sekolah-dasar-tahun-2021>
- Canteens in Serang (June 22, 2022)
<https://www.radarbanten.co.id/pt-cargill-bangun-sanitasi-toilet-dan-kantin-siswa-di-sdn-cibeureum-3/>
- Regional event in Serang (August 23, 2022)
<https://www.instagram.com/p/Chmio0qJ3ik/?igshid=MDJmNzVkMjY=>
- Regional event in Serang (August 24, 2022)
<https://centralnews.co.id/2022/08/24/program-prosper-care-peduli-tahap-iii-di-kabupaten-serang-berlanjut/>

Bone

- Video Conference on PROSPER II program in Bone (April 3, 2020)
<http://bappeda.bone.go.id/webpage/detailBerita/3>
- Coordination meeting with the local government of Bone (August 27, 2021)
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