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Women from the Matu Masu Dubara Network of Tam (Diffa, Niger) with Aminatou Galadima, Women Lead Manager, CARE Niger

**Women Lead in Emergencies supports local women's groups to take a lead in responding to the crises that affect them and their communities. It is the first practical toolkit for frontline CARE staff and partners with guidance on how to promote women's participation and leadership in humanitarian settings.**

## Why women's participation is a priority

Women and girls are hardest hit by conflict, disasters and emergencies:



When food is short, women and girls eat last, and least.



They are more likely to miss out on education.



They are the first to lose their jobs and livelihoods.



They have less access to life-saving maternal health services.



They are at much greater risk of sexual violence.



They take on even more responsibilities as caregivers – and not just for their own family, but for others, too.

Yet most women affected by crisis have little or no influence over decisions that affect their lives.

## Women have the right to a say

Women are currently excluded from most humanitarian responses – which means they do not have a say in identifying what their needs are and deciding how best to meet them. When women's voices are not heard, humanitarian responses can reinforce gender inequality, and even cause harm to women and girls.



Women's lack of participation in humanitarian responses 'severely limits our effectiveness', according to the UN.<sup>1</sup>



Yet local women's organisations are not consulted in nearly half of all humanitarian responses.<sup>2</sup>



Just 1% of all gender focused aid goes to women's rights organisations and institutions.<sup>3</sup>

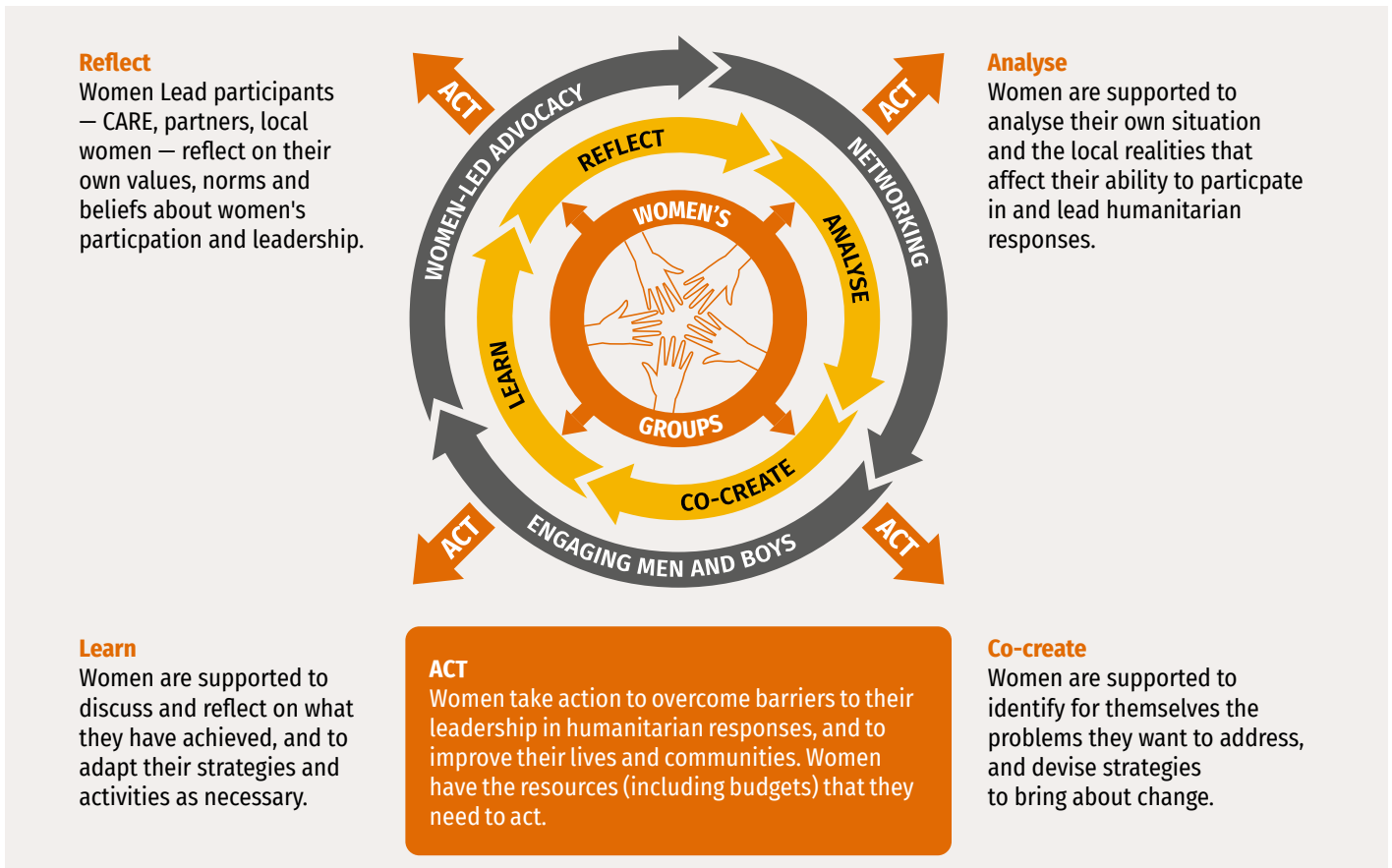


In the global COVID-19 response, women made up 70% of the health workforce – but held only 5% of the leadership positions.<sup>4</sup>



Only 1.2% of direct humanitarian assistance funding went to local and national actors in 2021, and women-led organisations received an even smaller share of this money.<sup>5</sup>

# Women Lead provides a 5-step model for working with poor, marginalised women so that they can take a lead in responding to the disasters and emergencies that affect their communities



*“Now that I am a leader, I can raise my voice and contribute to discussions that will improve the well-being of women and girls being challenged by their male counterparts”*

Lucy Ali, Vice-Chairperson of Omugo Refugee Welfare Council

## Women Lead in action

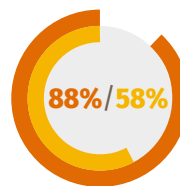
In Omugo settlement in Uganda, Women Lead supported groups of refugee women to identify the issues that affect their lives and develop their own strategies to address them. Together, Omugo's women's groups decided to:

- Prioritise adult literacy classes, financial and business skills training, and mental health and psychosocial support, as urgent barriers to women's leadership.
- Hold a Women's Conference promoting peace and reconciliation between different ethnic groups.
- Organise a peaceful community boycott that persuaded UN Agencies to move a food distribution point closer to their village.
- Formally register the first women's community-based organisation in the Omugo area.
- Stand in elections for the Refugee Welfare Council, the main representative body for refugees. As of 2021, 17 Women Lead participants sit on Omugo's Refugee Welfare Council.

## Find out more

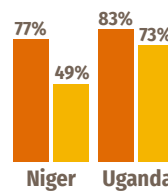
CARE has piloted or is using the Women Lead model across 15 locations in Colombia, Niger, Mali, the Philippines, Tonga, and Uganda. It has been used in all types of emergencies from natural disasters to protracted crises, and conflict settings to global health pandemics.

## What do we know about the Women Lead in Emergencies approach?



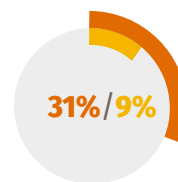
### Women are more confident:

In Niger, 88% of participants felt confident that they understood their rights and entitlements compared to only 58% of non-participants.



### Women participate more in public meetings:

In both Niger and Uganda, Women Lead members were more likely to speak in public meetings than non-members (77% to 49% in Niger and 83% to 73% in Uganda).



### Women Lead

In Niger, Women Lead members were more likely to hold leadership positions than non-members (31% to 9%)

To find out more, please contact the CARE Women Lead Global Coordinators:

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