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Multiplying Impact

Partnerships & platforms

Strengthen systems that support empowered women to exercise their right to food, water, and nutrition.

Livelihoods  
diversification  
and rural  
development

Resources  
& assets

Social protection

Inclusive  
markets

Preventing  
food loss &  
waste

Integrated  
water  
management  
& ecosystem  
protection

Nutrition

WASH  
services

**BUILD  
AGENCY**



**CHANGE  
RELATIONS**



**TRANSFORM  
STRUCTURES**



Innovation & Research

Evidence & Learning



# THE RIGHT TO FOOD, WATER & NUTRITION

## Impact Area Strategy (FY22-FY25)

## Context

We, and the systems that support us, are at a crossroads. There is only a decade to deliver progress against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), yet we are faced with an unprecedented global crisis precipitated by COVID-19. Realizing rights to food, water and nutrition, which are systematically denied to many in our world, will require all our energy and creativity. Food and water systems face serious challenges and are characterized by multiple, concurrent drivers and risks.

Primary in this context are the unjust social, environmental and economic systems and power dynamics that sustain women's and girls' exclusion and marginalization. Women's participation and leadership is not fully recognized and **gender-based discrimination and the denial of women's human rights** continue to drive food and nutrition insecurity, and limit access to safe water and sanitation. The discriminatory gender and social norms and practices inherent in this context shape the gendered distribution of paid and unpaid work; limit women's access to productive resources and markets or specific value chains; underpin unequal bargaining positions and the gendered division of labor; marginalize women from decision-making spheres at all levels and; perpetuate Gender-Based Violence (GBV).<sup>1</sup> The **lack of capture and analysis of data** on the gender- and age-based dimensions of food, nutrition and water access means that problem identification is partial, apolitical and genderblind.<sup>2</sup> This in turn leads to inadequate policies. Lack of or limited understanding of rights, or unwillingness or inability to address rights and obligations specifically outlined in voluntary or legally binding agreements or legislation means that there is widespread **failure to uphold rights**. Tenure and inheritance rights, for example, are frequently denied to women, either through harmful gender and social norms and barriers or through institutional and policy failures.

In 2019, almost 690 million people (8.9% of the global population) were malnourished.<sup>3</sup> But the economic, food, water, and health systems disruptions resulting from the **COVID-19** pandemic are expected to continue to exacerbate all forms of malnutrition. Estimates suggest that because of the pandemic an additional 140 million people will be thrown into living in extreme poverty on less than US\$1.90 per day in 2020.<sup>4</sup> The number of people in lower and middle income countries facing acute food insecurity may have doubled, to 265 million by the end of 2020.<sup>5</sup> More than 500,000 children under the age of 5 die each year from diarrheal disease caused by lack of adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and this number is expected to rise as a result of COVID-related disruptions to WASH and health systems<sup>6</sup>. Increasingly severe and frequent weather events and natural disasters will raise further urgent needs for WASH, as well as threaten WASH infrastructure and service delivery.

Food supply chain disruption, border restrictions and lockdowns have compromised cultivation, food transport and market access while remittances are declining and labor markets contracting.<sup>7</sup> Soaring unemployment rates and income losses, particularly among women, paired with rising food costs in many places, are jeopardizing food access. Small-scale farmers dependent on input markets, food value chain workers in urban and peri-urban areas and those living in countries dependent on food imports and food assistance are particularly vulnerable. GBV rates have increased and women are at higher risk of redundancy and livelihood deprivation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CARE, 2020, [Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition](#) – a Scoping Paper for the Committee on Food Security

<sup>2</sup> IDS, 2014, [Gender and Food Security: Towards Gender-Just Food and Nutrition Security](#)

<sup>3</sup> FAO, 2020, [State of Food Security in the World](#)

<sup>4</sup> Laborde D., et al, 2020, Poverty and food insecurity could grow dramatically as COVID-19 spreads. IFPRI <https://www.ifpri.org/blog/poverty-and-food-insecurity-could-grow-dramatically-covid-19-spreads>

<sup>5</sup> World Food Programme, 2020, COVID-19 will double number of people facing food crises unless swift action is taken. <https://www.wfp.org/news/covid-19-will-double-number-people-facing-food-crises-unless-swift-action-taken>

<sup>6</sup> Pneumonia and Diarrhea Progress Report 2020. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Nov. 2020.

<sup>7</sup> FAO, 2020, [Without Food there can be no exit from the Pandemic](#)

<sup>8</sup> CARE, 2020, [Left Out and Left Behind: Ignoring Women Will Prevent Us from Solving the Hunger Crisis](#)

Even before COVID-19, wasting, stunting, overweight, obesity and micronutrient deficiency rates were expanding.<sup>9</sup> The total numbers of people affected by **moderate or severe food and nutrition insecurity** means an estimated two billion people do not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food. This access deficit and impacts on malnutrition are often exacerbated by limited access to humanitarian and resilient WASH. Healthy diets are unaffordable to many, especially the poor, in every region of the world. Increases in all forms of malnutrition (including negative impacts on maternal nutrition) due to COVID-19 are projected, and this in the context of decreased access to health and nutrition services.

In 2020, nearly half of the world lived in areas of water stress during at least one month of the year, and 60% are expected to live in conditions of water stress by 2030.<sup>10</sup> As many as 700 million people are forecast to be displaced from their homes due to water scarcity by 2030. **Weaknesses in water and sanitation services and infrastructure limit practice of effective hygiene**, and collectively are resulting in multiple threats to health and nutrition. Yet, investment in water, sanitation, and hygiene is insufficient to meet national WASH targets in 80% of the world's countries, and gaps in policy and governance for WASH and water resources management, planning and protection persist at all administrative levels, and across sectors. Furthermore, sustainability of WASH infrastructure and services is limited by inter-related factors including lack of operation and maintenance, ineffective cost-recovery mechanisms, poor leadership and management of WASH services, lack of technical capacity to conduct repair once infrastructure breaks down, over-extraction and water scarcity that depletes water availability. One in nine people does not have **access to clean water** close to home, and one in four people does not have access to adequate sanitation – increasing stress and risk of harm for women and girls. Limitations in preferred and adequate menstrual hygiene options often lead to harms related to health, dignity and access to education and income options for women and girls. For households – especially those with limited access to health services – water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) are the most important protections against infectious disease.

Global food security depends on rainfall. The dependence of hundreds of millions of farmers on rainfed agriculture means there is **high risk to many livelihoods from drought and poor rains** (increasingly variable due to climate change), soil fertility decline and failed harvests.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, agriculture accounts for 70% of global freshwater use, the extraction of which causes significant local and landscape-level stresses, leading often to conflict and increased security risks, particularly for women and girls and disadvantaged and marginalized groups such as pastoralists, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities.

**Climate change** disruption and **biodiversity loss** are profoundly impacting food and water systems. Increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, rainfall variability and temperature increases are impacting ecosystem services, including freshwater, that support the production, safety, and nutrient value of food. Food systems are in turn contributing to climate change and biodiversity loss.<sup>12</sup> A quarter of total global greenhouse emissions is from land-use-change, production of crops and livestock (including chemical input use) and other food system sources. Current food systems models are also impacting ecosystem health, facilitating the proliferation of invasive species and driving biodiversity loss and **natural resource degradation**, thus exacerbating food and water insecurity and increasing social conflict. Agricultural models that prioritize monocultures at the expense of biodiversity, pesticides that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, and excessive water extraction despite increased water scarcity illustrate some of the ways that food production exacerbates and contributes to the effects of climate change. Unfettered social and environmental regulations have paved the way for agribusiness to promote these unsustainable agricultural models, often at the expense of vulnerable communities who already suffer the most under climate change. Consequent increases in **food**

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<sup>9</sup> FAO, 2019, [State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World](#)

<sup>10</sup> FAO. 2020. [The State of Food and Agriculture 2020. Overcoming water challenges in agriculture](#)

<sup>11</sup> International Panel on Climate Change, 2020, [Special Report, Climate Change and Land](#)

<sup>12</sup> Convention on Biological Diversity, 2020, [Global Biodiversity Outlook report](#)



**safety risks, pests and emerging diseases** are having wide ranging impacts on food security. Pollution, over-harvesting and over-use of natural resources (especially soil and water) are related challenges driven by unsustainable and inequitable food and water systems and exacerbated by climate change. The resulting food and water insecurity drives forced migration, conflict and poverty. Humanitarian crises are thus more complex and protracted as multiple stresses and shocks accumulate. Many local, national and regional economies depend heavily on the stability of ecosystems and their services and where this stability is threatened, jobs, livelihoods and community resilience are also threatened.

**Digital and other technologies** in production, financing, social protection and other spheres are creating opportunities, though equitable access to these technologies, such as mobile platforms, remains elusive. **Indigenous knowledge is under-valued in policy responses**, as are low-technology solutions, including agro-ecological solutions, which have multiple proven positive impacts<sup>13</sup>. Postharvest management and infrastructure remain weak and there are high levels of **food loss and waste**. Expansion in food and agriculture markets in recent decades has not resulted in greater equity in food systems and debate continues over the implications of **international food trade for food security, agri-food supply chain concentration and the power and influence of large corporations** vis-a-vis access to resources and services for small-scale production.

**Weak and fragmented governance** and inadequate accountability mechanisms are contributing to incoherent policy at different scales. Public sector investment in food and agriculture has declined, raising questions about the balance between the roles of public and private sectors in food systems. As mentioned above, public investments in water, sanitation, and hygiene are drastically insufficient to provide services for all. The number of people affected by food crises continues to grow. Fragile market systems, poor governance, lack of safety nets, civil strife and violence continue to affect the food and water security of millions of people in many **complex and conflict-affected environments** and many depend exclusively on food assistance. Coping mechanisms and local capacities to manage risks are often overwhelmed due to multiple stressors. All of the above challenges have disproportionate impacts on women and girls and marginalized communities -many of whom face **intersectional vulnerability** as they are at risk for more than one reason. Early marriage, unequal inheritance laws, mobility restrictions, for example, affect adolescent girls or young women's engagement in productive activities. Inequalities persist at all levels, particularly for youth, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities and seasonal, migrant or part-time laborers working in food systems value chains. Low wages, exclusion from value chains and markets, limited access to finance and to natural and productive resources are among the many barriers in the current global context.

**Demographic change, urbanization and rising incomes** are driving shifts in consumer food choices and demand, such as for processed foods and animal source protein. Food and fuel demand predominantly in the global north, combined with corporate control of agri-food chains and trade and tariff barriers, has stacked the odds against small-scale producers and small and medium enterprise in many developing countries. Rural-to-urban migration, and emigration, particularly of young men, is leading to higher rates of urban unemployment and risks of food insecurity among vulnerable urban populations. Urbanisation has caused additional stress on water and sanitation access, particularly in dense and unplanned settlements where services are not increasing at pace with population density. These new urban and peri-urban communities experience water and environmental pollution, malnutrition and other public health crises.

**Declining youth interest in agriculture** is presenting challenges for the future of food production, food system livelihoods and youth employment, making both on-farm and off-farm enterprise development a priority policy area. For many poor and marginalized women and their families, agriculture does not represent a pathway out of poverty, and they are reliant on non-agricultural income. The exclusion of adolescents and youth, particularly young women, from economic and decision-making processes and the lack of opportunity and education is driving youth migration from rural areas to cities and peri-urban areas or across borders where

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<sup>13</sup> [International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development Synthesis Report, 2010](#)

there is often underemployment and vulnerability to other risks such as exploitation and sexual and gender-based violence.

**Lack of voice and low representation of women** in decision-making positions in government, research and extension services, producer organisations, farmer or food producer unions or social movements is also a context factor. Women often cannot articulate their demands through membership-based institutions or feminist collectives and weak civil society or restricted civic space. If women do not have a decision-making role, particularly during times of transition affected by the factors named above, they risk being further marginalized (refer to CARE’s Women’s Economic Justice strategy for additional insights on this subject).

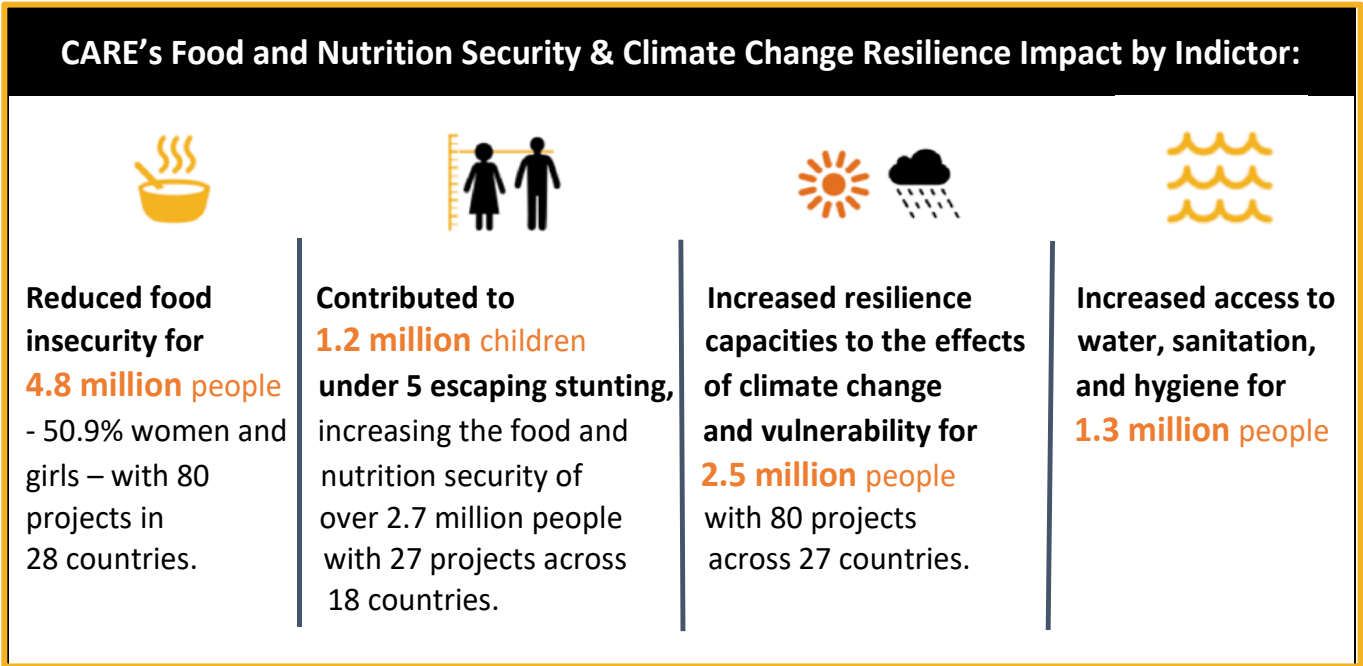
**CARE and Food and Water Systems - Capacities and Added Value**

**Reputation and Influence:** CARE draws on decades of work in protecting and enhancing food, nutrition and water security for the most vulnerable. Indeed, CARE’s origins in the aftermath of WWII, were in protecting the immediate food security of vulnerable families in Europe. In the decades since, CARE has worked closely with governments and communities to protect food and nutrition security for the poorest and most vulnerable and has a strong reputation and trust within national and local governments and communities around the world.

CARE has spent decades working at the community level, developing and refining participatory tools in collaboration with communities, strengthening individual and institutional capacities, amplifying voices of the most vulnerable and leveraging connections with government to better link communities to their representatives, and strengthen state-citizen accountability. This deep connection to communities and community well-being, and trust earned over decades, is at the heart of CARE’s work.

We have cultivated strategic partnerships within the donor, United Nations, peer International Non-governmental Organization (INGO), government, research institutions, civil society and private sector communities to enable the empowerment of poor women and girls to realize gender equitable food, water and nutrition security, to scale our impact for long-term social change and to elevate the principles of sustainability, productivity, equity and resilience (SuPER).

**Robust and transformative approaches to gender equality:** CARE places gender justice and the agency of



women and girls at the center of its food, water and nutrition work. This is underpinned by the unifying framework, She Feeds the World, which ensures that interventions are integrated, sequenced and layered to tackle harmful social norms, structural barriers and power imbalance. Our commitment to gender equality and our focus on women and girls has led to a comprehensive toolbox of proven gender equality models and approaches to enable transformative change. For example, [CARE's gender marker](#) augments internal accountability and improved program quality as it relates to gender integration. These models and approaches aim to identify and re-envision gendered policies, practices and norms that influence equal access by women and girls in all their diversity to and control over food, water, nutrition and income. Indeed, CARE has been an industry leader in conducting research and expanding knowledge and learning on gender equality approaches in food systems. Our research has shown that gender equality approaches have measurable impacts on household economies, empowerment, livelihoods and resilience<sup>14</sup>. This evidence and learning is manifested through policy influencing work at all levels – from community engagement with local service providers, to sub-national engagement with district authorities, to national policy development, to regional and continental processes, to multi-lateral and global UN Committee on Food Security level.

**Integrated approaches:** CARE's multi-sector programing allows us to see food, water, and nutrition issues as interlinked with each other and with other sectors. We know that the reality for communities is that food, water, nutrition, health, education and environmental, climate and economic justice are inseparable. We believe our multi-sector approach can be an advantage in addressing multi-faceted challenges across development, humanitarian and nexus settings. Moreover, we recognize that there are times when CARE is less well-placed, and we must enable partners with more specific expertise or specialization to lead. Recent development and expansion of strategic partnerships with actors in other sectors (such as conservation and environment) is testament to that approach to amplifying the impact of our capacities.

**Impact at Scale:** CARE has an expansive food, water and nutrition security portfolio that reflects the many interconnected challenges facing families. This work spans from responding to emergencies to enabling small-scale farmers, fishers, and pastoralists to sustainably increase productivity through increased access to water and other natural and productive resources and access to markets to building resilience to climate change, and to ensuring nutrition for their families. CARE also builds value-add off-farm livelihoods linked to production. In CARE's 2020 Fiscal Year alone, CARE implemented 398 WASH-related projects, impacting 12 million people<sup>15</sup> across 67 countries. In FY20, there were 629 food and nutrition security and climate change resilience projects, many of these also integrating water and WASH activities. Overall, these projects reached 23 million people directly (of whom 56.4% were women and girls) and 76 million indirectly across 76 countries. CARE documented 64 advocacy wins (policy or practice changes influenced by CARE and partners) from 2015-19, with actual impact on 3,186,795 people and potential impact on 91.5 million more.

CARE met 81% of its 50 million impact target for the 2020 strategy (40.404 million). Since 2014, CARE has helped 40.4 million people to increase their food security and resilience to climate change through 819 projects, working in 70 countries. Food insecurity was reduced for 4.8 million people (50.9% women and girls); 1.2 million children under 5 escaped stunting; 2.5 million people increased their abilities to build resilience to the effects of climate change and vulnerability and 1.3 million people had access to water, sanitation, and hygiene.

CARE's dual mandate aims to reduce vulnerability and enhance food and nutrition security through integrated and proactive risk reduction and management; expansion and improvement of humanitarian assistance;

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<sup>14</sup> NEF, 2017, Social Cost Benefit Analysis

<sup>15</sup> This includes WASH in emergencies, and was higher than normal due to the very high prevalence of WASH activities and behaviour change communications in COVID response. Typically, CARE averages about 5 million people impacted by WASH in emergencies work and 5 million people impacted by water resources management or WASH work each year. However, some of those 5M are already counted in food security and climate resilience projects, which would reduce the number of unique development WASH adds to about 2-2.5 million.

protection and improvement of people's nutritional status before, during and after emergencies; and enhancement of food security through productive safety net programs. Our work in food and nutrition security and water addressed both humanitarian and development needs and between 2015 and 2020 we increased attention to working on the challenges at the nexus of these areas, recognizing that building resilience over the long term is essential in meeting needs of women and girls in all their diversity. Our aim is to intensify our efforts through integration with CARE's women's economic justice, health equity and rights, gender justice, climate justice, education and humanitarian assistance teams.

**Catalyst for Civil Society:** In recent decades, CARE's emphasis has been on strengthening local, national and regional civil society and collective action and voice. CARE supports civil society partners, feminist organizations and social movement by facilitating and brokering communication and dialogue between different stakeholders. Our aspiration is to stand behind women and feminist organizations and social movements add to their confidence to support and lead change at community, sub-national, national, regional and global levels. Examples such as District Women in Agriculture Platforms in Ghana; women's groups who monitor highland water resources in Ecuador; women who are elected to local office in part due to the experience of leading village savings and loans associations; or women who lead policy influencing work on nutrition in regional advocacy networks. When women lead and influence through feminist principles, they support rights to economic justice for women – leading to improved access to food, water and nutrition for their families and communities.

## Theory of Change

### Impact Goal

CARE seeks a world of hope, inclusion and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and women and girls in all their diversity live in dignity and security. CARE's

Vision 2030 Right to Food, Water and Nutrition (SDGs 2,5&6<sup>16</sup>) impact area sets a goal for 75 million people, the majority of them women and girls, to increase their fulfillment of their right to food, water and nutrition. In so

### The SuPER Principles

CARE's work in food and water systems adheres to the principles of sustainability, productivity, equity and resilience (SuPER) which aim to address the needs of today's world, and the needs of future generations.

**Sustainable:** grounded in healthy ecosystems, stable and enduring institutions and sustainable financing.

**Productive:** increasing small-scale farmer production and profits, earned through increased returns on investment, results in nutritionally balanced diets, and is water smart and climate resilient.

**Equitable:** enables realization of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards for marginalized people, with particular focus on the needs of women.

**Resilient:** allows individuals, families, communities and systems to be able to withstand shocks and stresses, including climate impacts and other risks and to transform their lives and escape poverty.

### The WASH SuPER Principles

**Sustainable:** grounded in healthy ecosystems that generate and protect water in quantity and quality.

**Productive:** access to water serves multiple uses, including domestic, productive and income generating uses. CARE's work recognizes that and works to plan water access and management accordingly.

**Equitable:** all people, including the most marginalized, have access to safe, affordable water (and sanitation), and participate actively in decision making.

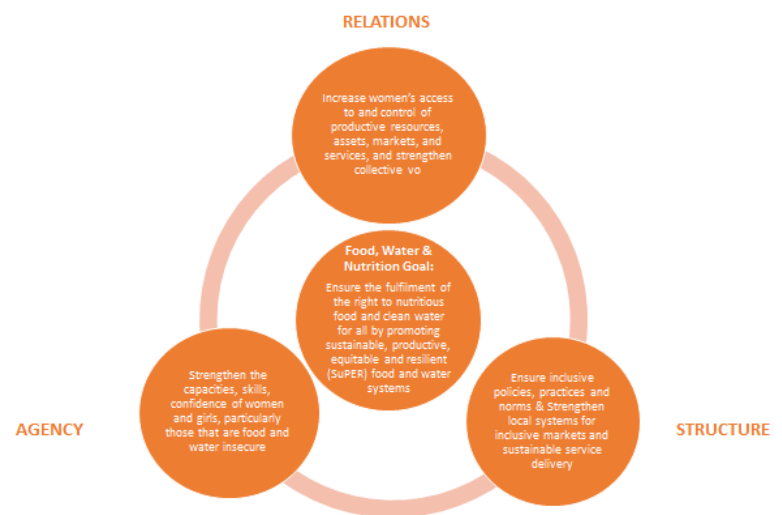
**Resilient:** reliable water access allows households and communities to withstand shocks and stresses. Sound WRM and planning helps to reduce the impacts of climate-related shocks and stresses.

<sup>16</sup> CARE recognizes the interdependency of the SDGs and our work on the Right to Food Water and Nutrition contributes to targets under all other SDGs.

doing, the Food and Water Systems (FWS) team strives to empower citizens, hold governments accountable, and foster collective action to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, and provide everyone access to safe, affordable drinking water and adequate sanitation and hygiene.

CARE's Right to Food, Water and Nutrition Impact Area Strategy goal **is to ensure the fulfilment of the right to adequate and nutritious food and clean water for all by promoting sustainable, productive, equitable and resilient (SuPER) food and water systems, while ensuring equitable, livable incomes and dignified livelihoods.** The Right to Food, Water, and Nutrition Theory of Change is based on CARE's Gender Equality framework and is framed around three levels of change to build agenda of women and girls in all their diversity and life stages, change relations between them and transform structures in order that they realize full potential in their public and private lives and are able to contribute equally to, and benefit equally from, social, political, and economic development. In order to ensure the fulfilment of the right to adequate and nutritious food and clean water for all, and ensure sustainable, productive, equitable and resilient food and water systems, we must:

- **Build Agency:** Strengthen the capacities, skills, confidence of women and girls, particularly those that are food and water insecure, to individually and collectively challenge social norms, including gender-based violence.
- **Change Relations:** Increase women's access to and control of productive resources, assets, markets, and services, and strengthen collective voice and promote equitable power relations in households.
- **Transform Structures:** Ensure inclusive and gender equitable policies, practices and norms & strengthen local systems for inclusive markets and sustainable service delivery.



CARE will achieve this goal by building the agency and amplifying the voices of food and water insecure women and girls, including women small-scale producers<sup>17</sup>, changing inequitable power relations, and supporting the transformation of structures that sustain inequality and discrimination. This will involve deploying context-appropriate models and approaches from our toolbox mentioned above – including the engagement of men and boys and collective community action.

### Areas of Change

CARE's high-level and inter-related objectives for ensuring the right to food, water, and nutrition and strengthening food and water systems are:

- Everyone has access to sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious food
- Everyone has access to sufficient, safe, affordable, and sustainably managed water and adequate sanitation.

The areas of change in food and water systems are distinct but inter-related, like the building blocks of a house. Broad areas of change are described below, while specific pathways of change are identified within the

<sup>17</sup> Where “producers” and “agriculture” are referred to in this document, we include crop and livestock production, (including aquaculture/fishing) or any mix of these livelihoods and workers engaged in these food systems. We also recognize that non-farm income is critical for many small-scale producers.



realms of Agency, Relations, and Structures in Annex 1.

### Support Empowered Women to Exercise Their Right to Nutritious Food and Safe Water



The CARE food and water systems areas of change are built on the **She Feeds the World** and **Water+ Strategic Frameworks** and are based on an integrated model involving eight inter-related pathways of change that are grouped into three change areas: Grow, Use and Buy. These areas challenge discriminatory gender and social norms, relations and structures and build women’s agency, leadership, and collective voice to bring transformational change for food and water insecure women and girls.

Transformational change must be equitable, and this implies plural and complementary approaches. We engage local communities to identify needs and solutions to address persistent challenges. CARE applies tools and practices across all the change areas, in contextualized, flexible and adaptive ways that adhere to Do No Harm

principles and engage with communities to identify needs and solutions to challenges. We will strategically sequence, layer and integrate development and humanitarian activities to assist program participants to build resilience, sustain or diversify livelihoods, and mitigate negative environmental impacts. In all areas of change, we will identify and address gender and social norms that inhibit progress and we will rigorously apply proven practices and approaches for the prevention and elimination of GBV. We will influence broader systems to support empowered women to:

**Grow** food and income-generating products, recognizing that healthy ecosystems, water management and climate resilience are critical to sustain water and grow food.

**Use** resources, approaches, social protection mechanisms and technologies to reduce food loss and waste, increase WASH services, ensure nutrition.

**Buy** and sell food and water-related goods and services in inclusive markets while diversifying their livelihoods and using market-based approaches.



### Grow

#### #1. Promote integrated water resources management and ecosystem protection and restoration

Water is essential to all of CARE’s outcome areas, a vital resource for all sectors, and foundational to resilience. Water scarcity and insecurity, caused by poor water resources management and exacerbated by climate change, drive cycles of drought and food insecurity, migration, and chronic emergencies. CARE ensures the

protection, restoration and management of ecosystems that supply water resources as a critical path to ensuring food security, nutrition and livelihoods, reducing forced migration and humanitarian emergencies, mitigating potential for conflict, and promoting wider economic and social wellbeing. CARE will build on decades of experience in landscape approaches and inclusive governance, integrated water resources management, climate change adaptation and water-smart agriculture models to ensure that communities and governments are addressing risks to the ecosystems upon which they depend. We will enable the engagement of women and youth in the development and scale of innovations and models for improved water resource management and protection and continue to engage with partners at all levels in driving better practice and policy.

Our work to increase water-use efficiency and reduce water stress includes promoting water-smart agriculture to reduce agricultural water withdrawals, increase rainwater harvesting, and ensure women small-scale farmers have access to water for agriculture, especially in vulnerable watersheds and water scarce contexts. This work also relies on the integration of water resources management in disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and humanitarian, nexus, and development interventions.



## **#2. Increasing women's access to and control of sustainable productive resources and assets**

including land, water and other inputs such as seeds, animal feed, etc., information and technologies, extension and climate services and savings and finance for running costs and capital investments. We will build capacities and strengthen women producers' voice, agency and capacities to increase resilience to the impacts of climate change, environmental degradation, market failure or other risks through community-based approaches and models that improve governance, service delivery and systems approaches. We will enhance the inclusion of women in decision-making and participatory management of national and community assets (e.g. water- or land-use committees). We will promote equitable power relations and integrate GBV prevention and response programming to ensure women's rights and advocate for harmony in households among women and girls in all their diversity.

## **Use**



**#3. Preventing food loss and waste** through women-led post-harvest management, improved storage infrastructure, marketing and processing, and accelerated behavior change by consumers. We will leverage our agriculture value chains and markets, inclusive finance and climate resilient agriculture models to impact the lives of small-scale women food producers and, in doing so, improve incomes, create greater nutritional diversity and improve the efficiency of natural resource usage. We will build on our collectives and producer group work particularly with women and youth to promote economies of scale such as aggregation of produce, access to post-harvest technologies, and lower production costs per unit of crop sold.



**#4. Improving nutrition** through local structures or collectives such as care groups or savings groups and integrated approaches. These will include both nutrition-specific approaches that directly affect nutrition for women and children, and nutrition-sensitive approaches that support dietary diversity and promote positive nutrition practices through male engagement and sectoral interventions such as homestead food production, improved WASH access and agriculture and natural resource management practices and models that prioritize nutrition outcomes. Building on successes, we will build stronger service delivery and coordination systems across stakeholder platforms that improve access and delivery of quality health, agriculture, water, climate and education services, for improved nutrition.



## **#5. Increasing access to water, sanitation and hygiene services**

CARE believes that water and sanitation services at domestic and institutional levels, and access to hygiene knowledge and products, underpins dignity, health and well-being for all – but is particularly

important for women and girls and marginalized groups, and during humanitarian emergencies. We will ensure sustainable services through strategies that include strengthening WASH governance, policy, and monitoring at national, district and community levels; strengthening capacities of service providers, including small-medium enterprises and entrepreneurs to deliver services; facilitating WASH demand and addressing social and gender norms that influence WASH behaviors, including menstrual hygiene management; and increasing leadership of women, girls, and the most marginalized in WASH decision-making.



**#6. Strengthening social protection and building efficient, inclusive local structures and systems,**

assisting vulnerable households to find sustainable pathways toward food, water and nutrition security, including in times of crisis or in contexts of chronic poverty where additional support is required. Interventions in this space will include food aid, school feeding, vouchers, cash transfers and strengthening shock responsive safety nets, and building citizen and provider accountability mechanisms and relationships. The aim is to use such support to stimulate markets, promote good practice, and create improvements in sustainable community capacities, motivation, resources, and where feasible, linkages to market or governance systems, enabling households to graduate from safety net schemes as livelihoods are transformed. We will build on successes in influencing governments to develop, reform and implement policies and strategies that ensure social protection as a human right and as an instrument to reduce food, nutrition and water insecurity.

**Buy**



**#7. Enabling women's access to inclusive markets.** Applying the best of our food and water systems and women's economic justice approaches, we will aim to unlock greater production, expansion of profits and social and environmental returns for women from small-scale agriculture. We will

increase food, water and nutrition security and climate resilience through the promotion of women producers' ability to participate and take leadership in collectives and service delivery to voice their needs, access input markets, negotiate better outcomes, make decisions in market systems, and play non-traditional roles such as aggregators, innovators and WASH service providers and business leaders – thereby transforming markets to become more inclusive, sustainable and just. We will also ensure our market systems work builds resilience so that communities can better absorb and adapt to economic, social, political or environmental shocks.



**#8. Promoting livelihoods diversification and rural development.** To address the fact that

agriculture does not represent the only pathway out of poverty for many rural women and their families, CARE will address gender- and age-related barriers to livelihood opportunities. We will promote livelihood diversification including integrated development policies and investments; climate change resilience and disaster risk reduction approaches;<sup>18</sup> youth employment through vocational education, entrepreneurship, emerging technological and innovation opportunities. We will be increasing access to finance, tools and training for women to improve their economic options and potential for income and we will leverage market actors to respond to the needs of vulnerable populations in accessing nutritious food, water and production inputs during crises.

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<sup>18</sup> For example, Community-based Adaptation, Early Warning Systems and Disaster Risk Management/Response.



## Metrics and Indicators

The table above outlines the main indicators<sup>19</sup> to measure progress under Food and Water System Strategy for vision 2030, in terms of the overall impact on Right to Food, Water, and Nutrition impact area as well as in relation to the eight interrelated areas of change.

CARE will apply the above common set of indicators in its FWS programming to enable the measurement and presentation of a coherent, global picture of the impact we will contribute to. In line with CARE's 2030 Program Strategy, FWS puts women and girls at the center of its work and the measurement metrics are designed to capture impact that contributes to the broader organizational goal of gender justice. We have selected indicators on women's empowerment for Agency, Relations, Structures, meaning that we will be able to tell our impact story on the three-dimensions of women's empowerment and gender equality. Considering the humanitarian-development nexus, FWS will also prioritize integrated programming and alignment with the measurement system of other impact areas such as the Humanitarian Action impact area (an illustrative example of the same is provided below). Nutrition-sensitive approaches will be integrated into our work with WASH, economic development, food security, education and health, to provide foundations for good nutrition.

The measurement metrics alignment to the SDGs and CARE's Program Information and Impact Reporting System (PIIRS) allowing us to show our contribution to the global impact. The measurement system incorporates participatory approaches and both quantitative and qualitative methods to show critical contributions on gender equality through women's empowerment in agricultural programming. Quantitative data will describe the number of participants (direct and indirect) CARE is reaching and the sustainable impact we are able to bring to program participants and indirect beneficiaries. Qualitative findings will complement quantitative data by capturing case stories behind the numbers; identifying specific behavior changes and actions (positive and

<sup>19</sup>Projects/programs are not required to have all the indicators listed here but will select those that are relevant to their work.



negative, intended and unintended); and identifying program- and non-program factors that contribute to any behavior and relationship changes — including how increases in women's productivity, capacities, and income influence changes at household and community level. The learning generated through this process will feed into improving FWS programming and our advocacy and influencing work contributing to greater quality and scale of impact throughout our work.

## RIGHT TO FOOD, WATER & NUTRITION

Empowered women and girls fulfill their right to nutritious food and clean water, while ensuring equitable, livable incomes and dignified livelihoods

AGENCY	RELATIONS		STRUCTURES
IMPACT INDICATORS/CORE INDICATORS (SADD)			
% with moderate or severe food insecurity, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale – SDG -2.1.2	% of children 0-59 months experiencing malnutrition: stunting (SDG 2.2.1), wasting or overweight (SDG 2.2.2)		
# and % of people using at least basic drinking water and/or basic sanitation services	# and % of women who have meaningfully participated in household decision-making in (a) agricultural production (b) use of household income		# of new or amended policies, legislation, public programs, and/or budgets responsive to the food, water and nutrition rights, needs, and demands of women and girls in all their diversity
INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (SADD)			
GROW	ACCESS	ADVANCE	TRANSFORM
% increase in yield per unit area (or productivity per unit area which will also cover fisheries, livestock etc.)	# and % of people using formal and informal financial services to invest in livelihoods	# of collective actions by women’s movements to present demands to powerholders	# and % of women & men reporting gender equitable attitudes (GEM scale)
# and % of women who own or control productive asset	# and % of farmers accessing (a) output markets to sell agricultural produce (b) input markets for agricultural inputs	Weekly hours spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex	% of water supply ecosystems conserved or recovered
% increase in household income	# and % of people with access to universal social protection services	Proportion of schools and health facilities with drinking water from an improved source available at the school	# and % of local administrative units with established and operational water resources management and protection plans

# and % of women with increased capability to perform economic activity	Food loss index and food waste index (SDG - 12.3.1)		
# and % of people who employed practices to protect their food, water and nutrition security from negative impacts of climate related shocks & stresses	# and % of women and children with anemia	Proportion of schools and health facilities with improved sanitation facilities at the school, which are single-sex and usable and at least toilet for staff; at least one accessible for people with disabilities; at least one with a lock and MHM disposal facilities	# and % of people who sustainably manage their water-supplying ecosystems
# and % of women with confidence in own communication and negotiation skills	# and % of people obtaining quality food of adequate quantities	Proportion of schools and health facilities with handwashing facilities, which have soap and water available within 5m of toilets and for health facilities at point of care	# and % of women participating in protection of water resources and water-related ecosystems
# and % of women holding leadership positions	% incurring crop production losses	# and % of households who report a positive change in nutrition practices	# and % of women holding leadership positions
# and % of program participants in VSLA or similar financial collective	# and % of farmers experiencing post-harvest losses due to poor storage of crops		# and % of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management (SDG – 6.b.1)
# and % of people who use climate information services	# and % of women age 15 to 49 years with minimum dietary diversity (MDDW)		# and % of women experiencing water stress
% of agricultural area under sustainable agricultural and natural resource management practices	# and % of children 6–23 months of age who receive a minimum acceptable diet		
# of people and % of population using (a) safely managed sanitation and (b) a handwashing facility with soap and water at home	# and % of infants who are breastfed exclusively through 6 months		
# and % of people living in open defecation free communities			

## CARE's Focus

### Gender Justice at the Center for Transformative Change

FWS places [gender justice](#) at the heart of its programming; both as an end in itself and a means to multiplying impact across the eight change areas described above. In alignment with CARE's [Gender Equality Framework](#) (GEF) FWS supports program design, implementation and evaluation that builds on successful and innovative gender equality approaches for building women's agency, changing power relations and transforming structures to achieve the right to food, water and nutrition.

Through [Farmer Field and Business School](#) (FFBS), an integrated gender equality approach to food systems programming, women will strengthen their knowledge, skills, leadership and confidence in sustainable, water smart, and nutrition-sensitive agriculture; market engagement, livelihoods diversification, and participatory monitoring and evaluation.

[Social Analysis and Action](#) (SAA) will be applied to facilitate critical dialogue with community members and leaders, and CARE and partner staff, to analyze and set action for a shift in discriminatory gender and social norms that exclude women from food systems and local water governance. Advocacy will be an integral part of transforming structures to improve women's access to productive resources, especially land. The Male Engagement Model will be key to the engagement of men and boys to change intimate power relations in households, for equitable redistribution of care work, and the prevention of and response to GBV. Community collectives ([VSLAs](#), producer/marketing groups, cooperatives, WASH committees, natural resource management committees etc.) will be leveraged for amplifying women's voice and leadership in food security, water and nutrition programming.

CARE will build on the gains made in women's empowerment, gender and social norm change measurement that include women and communities' own perspectives for gender equality MEL using the Pro-WEAI<sup>20</sup>, Outcome Mapping, and Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP) tools. We will also deploy tools and learning from more than a decade of leadership in community-based adaptation to climate change, elevating CARE's work on gender equality adaptation and ensuring women have a voice in local and national policy processes. FWS will continue the adaptation of the [Community Score Card](#) (CSC) approach to food systems and WASH governance programming to enable women hold service providers accountable for equitable access to agricultural extension, nutrition and WASH services including digitized access to information while paying attention to bridging the digital gender gap. CARE will hold itself accountable by assessing FWS programming through consistent use of the [Gender Marker](#) tool in all stages of program design and implementation to improve program quality and promote learning. While the hunger pandemic induced by COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting women, it has also shown women's leadership and resilience. CARE values and promotes women responders in humanitarian crises and in development with the aim of building back equal and realizing women's rights.

CARE recognizes that in order to improve gender equality and women's voice – we need to facilitate women's participation and leadership in multiple ways. We need to increase the number of female staff working in programs for CARE and food and water systems in order to diversify conversations and solutions with government, private sector and community and we need to support and facilitate government efforts to increase gender diversity. Finally, we will strive for the highest standards in the collection and management of

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<sup>20</sup> Project-level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (Pro-WEAI) project-level WEAI (pro-WEAI) measures women's empowerment in various types of agricultural development projects

sex and age disaggregated data and continue to seek opportunities in our programming research and learning to improve the use of data for equity outcomes.

### Impact Populations

CARE works with communities facing poverty and marginalization and whose livelihoods are constrained by current food systems practices. These are people that experience discriminatory practices and harmful gender and social norms that limit their ability to pursue sustainable, productive and profitable, equitable and resilient livelihoods.

**Food and water insecure women and girls** are the primary impact population for CARE's work under the Right to Food, Water and Nutrition impact area. This encompasses different categorizations<sup>21</sup>.

- 1. Women small-scale food producers.** Women engaged in crop and/or livestock production (including fishers and pastoralists) and women engaged in the cultivation of non-timber forest products or other foods for consumption or sale. Many are engaged in mixed food systems livelihoods and we also recognize that many combine this with off-farm work.
- 2. Women and girls living in water scarcity or water stress in rural and urban areas:** Women and girls living in water-stressed areas and those experiencing the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation - often more than men and boys in the same conditions, due to ascribed gender roles and responsibilities
- 3. Women and girls with inadequate sanitation and hygiene access:** Across diverse sectors, from food security and agriculture to those focusing on reduced early and forced marriage, CARE prioritizes the needs and preferences of women and girls in sanitation and hygiene access, knowledge and practice.
- 4. Institutions and structures:** CARE works with systems actors; multilateral organizations, governments and public sector bodies, private sector entities, community-based organizations, feminist organizations, social movements and other development partners to promote gender justice and transformative change for food insecure women and girls.
- 5. Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and other affected populations in food and water insecure humanitarian and conflict contexts:** Other migrant groups and host communities also represent impact populations as they frequently face food, water and nutrition insecurity.
- 6. Pregnant and lactating women and children under 2 years:** CARE will employ nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions to meet the needs of pregnant and lactating women and children under two.
- 7. Adolescent girls and rural youth:** we will work with youth who face myriad challenges including insufficient access to education, productive resources and markets. We will work with young women and men entrepreneurs and with adolescent girls in contexts with high rates of early and forced marriage and pregnancy.
- 8. Indigenous peoples,** given the specific marginalization they face and their role as stewards of natural resources and biodiversity. CARE programs will integrate specific measures that ensure the respect of indigenous peoples' rights and their participation in governance and decision-making processes.
- 9. Marginal urban or peri-urban populations:** We will focus efforts on making market systems inclusive through the generation of employment, diversifying livelihoods, improving resilience through social protection and addressing rights to nutritious food.
- 10. Men and boys:** CARE will work with men and boys to transform relations and structures to be gender equitable. We will engage male leaders and norm gatekeepers to act as role models in challenging masculinities and the harmful gender and social norms that sustain and exacerbate exclusion and discrimination.

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<sup>21</sup> It is important to note that these impact group sub categorizations are non-exhaustive and there is not yet wide consensus on the detail. This text requires further refinement and consultation.



**11. People with special needs**, given their extreme vulnerability. People with physical disabilities, for example, often struggle to access water services or sanitation facilities, putting them at a higher risk of discomfort, infection, GBV and facing discrimination.

CARE's intent is to **directly reach** at least **25 million people** (at least 55% of them women), and to **indirectly reach** a further **50 million people** in the period from **2020 to 2023**.

CARE's will implement its Right to Food, Water and Nutrition Strategy synergically with the **Women Economic Justice Impact Area Strategy**, whose goal is to ensure women have more equitable access to and control over economic resources and opportunities.

CARE's Women Economic Justice Strategy is based on our Gender Equality Framework (GEF) and together with partners we will support the collective achievement of women's economic justice by focusing on three domains of change. Within the **agency domain** we will work with women to strengthen their aspirations and awareness of rights and their knowledge, skills and capabilities. In the **relations domain** we will encourage and support women's collectives, support space for women's voice and leadership and engage men and boys. Finally, with women and in support of feminist social movements, we seek to **transform structures** by promoting positive norms and practices and influencing market and government actors, policies and institutions.

The strategy aims to directly reach **50 million people** over 10 years, including women small-scale food producers, women entrepreneurs, and women workers including young women and women living in fragile or conflict-affected contexts.

### Targeted Contexts

This strategy applies to all CARE programing related to food and water systems in all countries where CARE works. Different contexts require different modalities and combinations of interventions and priorities and this will be based on thorough analysis and consultation. CARE will focus on directly saving lives and promoting long-term development through our programs, and multiplying impact through evidence and influencing at a global scale.

- In **humanitarian and conflict contexts**, we are committed to ensuring timely and effective emergency food and water security interventions that can save the lives of women, girls, men and boys; reduce suffering, protect livelihoods and enhance resilience. We will support the WASH in Emergencies team to develop response strategies in line with possibilities for long-term service delivery. We will support disaster risk management, water resource management, cash and vouchers when appropriate, and other community resilience-building interventions.
- In **nexus and fragile contexts**, we support food and water security and nutrition interventions that build the foundation for lasting change, rebuild livelihoods, and provide families with early recovery support, including agricultural production, cash for work and microfinance to foster resilient market systems, inject income, and build, protect, and improve community assets. CARE will combine and leverage humanitarian assistance and development programming – recognizing the role of water insecurity in compounding emergencies, the potential for emergency response programming to lay the building blocks for sustainable service delivery, and the potential for water governance to be an effective cooperative force even in the midst of protracted crises.

- Most of our food and water systems' development program actions will take place in **least developed countries** (LDCs). We will strive to have women leaders and managers in our programming, and we will work with partners and peers who share commitment to gender and climate just food and water systems.
- In **middle income countries** (MICs) CARE will also engage with partners (civil society, government, feminist organizations, social movements, academia, and the private sector) to manage and promote gender just and climate just food, water and nutrition approaches.

### Targeted Geographies

Out of the more than 100 countries where CARE works, we will *prioritize*, for program action:

- A set of +/- 40 countries where **CARE is present** (either CARE Member Countries or Country Offices)
- Countries where CARE has a significant record working on food systems and whose **Global Hunger Index** in 2020 was either *serious* or *alarming*<sup>22</sup>
- **Water scarce regions** including geographies such as the Sahel, Horn of Africa, Middle East, the Dry Corridor of Central America, and the high Andes of South America
- Our humanitarian programming will also respond to **emerging crises** in these or any other geographies
- CARE will not exclude implementing food system programming in other countries, but the emphasis in terms of fundraising, building capacities and delivering will be in these priority countries.

### Countries with serious or alarming hunger levels

**Asia:** Afghanistan Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam

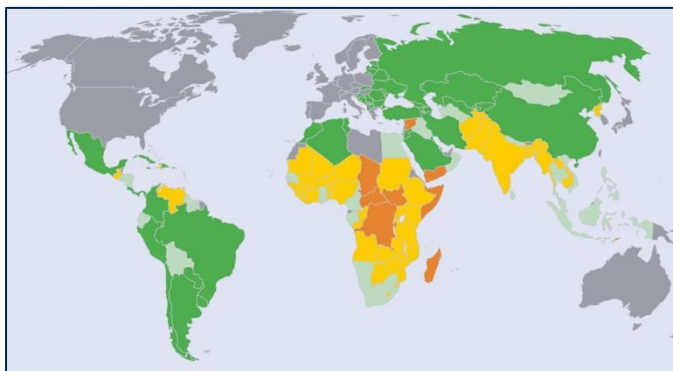
**West Africa:** Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Chad, Benin

**Great Lakes and Horn of Africa:** Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC

**Southern Africa:** Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe

**Central and South America:** Venezuela, Guatemala, Peru, Ecuador

**MENA:** Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Palestine, Egypt



### Impact Pathways

CARE's aims to transform food and water systems far beyond the communities where CARE and partners work directly, via alliances and partnerships, inclusive policies and advocacy, and research and innovation that account for the needs of women small-scale producers and other groups marginalized in food and water systems. Action to advance equitable livelihoods in the context of food and water systems will require multisectoral coordination, social analysis and action, and policy coherence across sectors, stakeholders and national and international value chains. It will also require supporting and engaging with feminist organizations and social movements.

### Frameworks and Approaches

CARE will primarily include these approaches and models in its food and water systems programming:

<sup>22</sup> Serious: Countries with a GHI score between 20.0 and 34.9; Alarming: Countries with a GHI score between 35.0 and 49.9 (<https://www.globalhungerindex.org/results.html>).

**Village Saving and Lending Associations (VSLAs):** To ensure women are at the center of our work, the formation or engagement of [VSLAs](#) or similar women-led savings groups will become a uniform dimension of CARE's food and water systems' programming. Integrating complementary solutions such as critical reflection and dialogues on discriminatory gender and social norms, knowledge sharing on improved agricultural practices or nutrition, women-led collective action, and supporting group-to-group networking will expand on models like those pioneered in Ethiopia (VESA) and Niger (MMD).

**Farmer Field and Business School (FFBS):** The [FFBS](#) approach integrates key skills around agriculture, market literacy, gender dialogues, nutrition, and climate resilience. It is also a vehicle for creating awareness and building consensus on the choices and aspirations of men and women, as well as starting a dialogue on decision making and gender relations at household and community levels.

**Engaging Men and Boys (EMB):** [EMB](#) is used to support women's empowerment and changes in gender relations (around activities such as community theatre, sports events or traditional dances), and engage with traditional and community leaders or others who can serve as role models.

**Social Analysis and Action (SAA):** [SAA](#) is designed to address social, economic and cultural factors by taking CARE and partner staff and the community through a journey of self-reflection, assessment and action. Transforming staff capacity through SAA enables development workers to successfully work with communities to identify links between discriminatory social and gender norms, and food insecurity, nutrition, access to water, and then determine how to address them.

**Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA)** to analyze the differential vulnerability of men's and women's livelihoods and resources *vis-a-vis* climate change and ecosystem degradation. [CVCA](#) is a key first step in Community-based Adaptation ([CBA](#)), an approach of which CARE is a pioneer.

**Water Smart Agriculture (WaSA)** will serve as a guiding framework for both farmers and governments, seeking to invest in technologies and practices, including water source protection, that will sustainably increase agricultural production without deepening water scarcity.

**The [Push-Pull model](#)** combines a focus on producers' abilities with activities that change the way other market actors relate to these producers, taking into account the particular needs of specific market opportunities. Diverse market opportunities are promoted, to avoid dependence on one purchaser or one crop, where power imbalances and fluctuating prices create significant risk for small-scale producers.

**[Collective Impact for Nutrition](#)** model; based on the logic that to eradicate stunting, we must move from direct implementation of traditional projects to convening and coordinating partners for joint implementation of proven program models. We also must couple this approach with national-level advocacy to prevent stunting, as well as identifying partner institutions, including government counterparts, and bringing them together to collectively address the causes of stunting.

**Nutrition-sensitive approaches** will be integrated into our work in WASH, economic development, food security, education and health, to provide the foundations for good nutrition.

**Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA)-** [CVA](#) is a growing component of CARE's programming CVA is closely tied to CARE's market-based approach to unlocking access to inputs. CARE will enhance use of CVA, striving to ensure it is acutely aligned with market potential and consistently gender responsive or gender equality. Enhancing CARE's market monitoring and CVA design and delivery capabilities as well as a focus on financial system, ID

and mobile phone access for target populations represent areas for focus and learning within this core model.

**Strengthening Water Systems approach.** CARE commits to sustainable [water](#) services that benefit people for years to come. A key component of this commitment is reinforcing the local system – the people, structures, and policies that are fundamental to sustaining those services, and the resources they rely on. CARE works with government, private sector, and other partners at the community, regional, and national level to strengthen collective capacity for planning, finance, monitoring, and management. We work with people and institutions to ensure they have the skills and resources to manage, maintain, and finance water and sanitation services over time, and protect water resources now and into the future.

**Water Conservation models-** Our focus is to protect the ecosystems, watersheds and water resources that sustain communities, including their food and livelihoods, in the long term. This includes policies and investments that protect landscapes and water resources at scale, as well as household and community-level behaviors that ensure sustainable use. From monitoring critical boreholes in water scarce contexts, to high-altitude wetland protection, to setting up rainwater harvesting systems to installing new water monitoring technologies, we use both time-tested and innovative solutions to conserve water in the face of varied and unpredictable threats.

### Advocacy

Through advocacy at all levels, CARE will seek to influence the policies and practices of governments and corporations to provide equitable livelihoods and improve nutrition for small-scale farmers and wage workers, especially women and girls, as well as better access to water. Approaches that are aligned between national and global advocacy include promoting land tenure, greater access to markets and extension services, and reducing food loss and waste. By leveraging evidence of approaches that work, and by building capacity around the CARE network, we will seek to scale-up and out successful approaches, both technical and policy-oriented, to multiply our impact on SuPER food systems. Main opportunities for impact via advocacy include:

- **Global Level:** CARE has been invited into leadership positions at three critical agenda-setting summits in 2021 - the UN Food Systems Summit, Nutrition for Growth Summit and UN Climate Talks. CARE will also continue to work to influence the Committee on World Food Security.
- **National Level/governments:** The focus of this work will be both on institutionalizing commitments through long-term pro-poor gender equality policies, and on full resourcing and implementation of existing policies, popularizing the national policies with women groups and advocating for prioritization of the women's needs for realization of the right to food and nutrition.
- **Companies:** CARE has existing relationships with several agribusinesses and has the potential to advocate with both headquarters and country offices. The interaction of businesses with small-scale farmers should not be extractive on either end but should lead to farmers having their full rights to land, productive and natural resources, water and extension services. The interaction should also lead to small-scale farmers who are the leading producers leading the agenda with food and seed sovereignty being respected. Advocacy partners could include GAIN, IFAD, Cargill, Mars, Walmart, PepsiCo McCormick and Mondelez.

### Systems Strengthening

We will work to increase the capacities of institutions to provide inclusive and effective food and water systems-related services and fulfil their obligations to the rights of the poor and marginalized. CARE and partners will work with frontline staff from all relevant line ministries (including health, agriculture, WASH and education) to strengthen government systems for improved access to and delivery of quality services. For instance, in the case of WASH programming, CARE will work on strengthening capacity of municipal or district government staff to plan, budget, and monitor for WASH service provision; work with government or private



sector to develop innovative models for service delivery; help put into place accountability and transparency mechanisms between service providers and customers; helping service providers to evaluate cost-recovery models; and helping multi-sector coordination for WASH provision and monitoring, etc.

### **Social Accountability**

Monitoring and evaluation will be a critical aspect of CARE's work on food and water systems. Using evidence is critical to achieving scale—either alone or through partners. We need to know what works and what doesn't. CARE's global indicators will guide our data collection to ensure that we are measuring impact consistently in ways that help us contribute to global discussions around ending poverty, such as the Sustainable Development Goals. We routinely analyze and compile evidence from our research and programming to inform decisions and advocacy messages. In addition, participatory monitoring and evaluation tools, such as the Participatory Performance Tracker and Community Score Card, are employed with groups we work with to assess their own progress, building transparency and momentum and pressure to improve.

### **Supporting Social Movements**

As global food and water systems face multiple threats and challenges there is an opportunity for social movements<sup>23</sup>, feminist organizations and civil society to play a more active role in building social justice. CARE will increase its focus on engaging with the food sovereignty<sup>24</sup> movements and the social movements on Water Justice as we explore ways to operate as a convener, a resource partner and an amplifier of their voice, changing the way we engage and listen, respecting the autonomy, culture and identity of these movements, and - where appropriate - prioritize movements' agenda and vision over ours. Women's collective organization and movement-building, such as in Niger, shows how helping create networks of VSLAs and supporting the building of a movement from these, has had transformational effects, in women's self-esteem, political participation, policy influence and normative change. Local structures and collectives are supported to advocate for women's rights, and access to extension services or other productive resources. CARE's civil society resource provides tools and guidance for strengthening civil society organization capacities.

### **Inclusive Market-based Approaches (MBAs)**

Market-based approaches will be pivotal to CARE's achievement of the Strategy goal, contributing to impacts on at least 20M people. MBAs that will play the largest role in this (reaching 10M+ plus participants) are the expansion of VSLAs as a platform to support the strategy implementation and those focused on unlocking small-scale farmer access to input and output markets. Social business engagement and promotion, cash and voucher assistance and advisory services to influence corporate practices will also play key roles in achieving our goal.

### **Contextual Adaptation**

Consistent with the CARE 2030 Strategy, which encourages improved coordination between humanitarian and development actions, the Food and Water Systems and Humanitarian Teams will work together more closely. This comes from a recognition that there is often significant coherence among our impact populations as we work to address hunger, malnutrition and vulnerabilities. The needs and rights of populations for nutritious food, water and incomes to address other basic needs do not change. Indeed, these needs become more critical and acute in humanitarian contexts.

This strategy is intended as a common, programmatic framework, which is adaptable to different contexts or to

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<sup>23</sup> The definition that CARE uses for social movements is "an organized set of people vested in making a change in their situation by pursuing a common political agenda through collective action" (Srilatha Batliwala)

<sup>24</sup> "Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems." (La Via Campesina)

the specific impact groups that projects or programs are working with. While based on an integrated approach, with gender justice at the front and center, in different contexts, some of the areas of change may be more important than others. In humanitarian or fragile contexts, there may be more emphasis on social protection, or on humanitarian nutrition support, while work on inclusive markets would need a particular focus on resilient market systems. Maintaining strong links with the humanitarian work will ensure layering of activities with support for engagement in social and economic opportunities (e.g., savings) to reinforce adaptive capacities. Adaptation and flexibility in responses will ensure timely shift between humanitarian and development activities as the situation dictates. This is key to address the target population changing needs and demands. Similarly, when working with youth or with pastoralists or fisherfolk, different areas of the framework, and the tools to be used, will need adapting to the specific impact population. In other contexts, other organizations may be better placed to work on specific areas, and so CARE and partners would focus on contextually specific change areas.

### Partnership

Partnership is central to CARE's work and under this IAS we will support and leverage the expertise, autonomy and agency of partners to advance practices and policies that meet the needs and protect and promote the rights of women, girls and other vulnerable groups in food and water systems. CARE has hundreds of partners across its food, water and nutrition portfolio, from social enterprises to community-based organisations and local NGOs, to governments, multi-laterals and all forms of private sector actors, feminist and women's led organizations and research institutions.

Our rationale for partnership is wide and varied and includes resource mobilization, implementation and influencing. In the next three years, our work on the right to nutritious food and water will require reflection on the power structures that have shaped our partnership work and we will challenge our dependency on partners that sustain imbalanced power dynamics in development work. We will sustain key strategic partnerships but seek to decentralize learning, research and implementation approaches by balancing with more outreach to and capacity strengthening of partners in developing countries and particularly the empowerment of southern civil society actors and social movements. But diversity of partners is key to just transformation in food and water systems and we will thus continue and increase engagement with those who are change makers at all levels. This includes savings groups at community level but also agri-business, medium and small enterprise and digital technology and social media entities.

We will focus on six key aims in our partnership work

- **Driving scale of successful approaches;** we will build complementary alliances and partnerships that add value to CARE's work and from which CARE can learn, are able to adopt programming on larger scales, and who have responsibility to fulfil rights through policy change and implementation.
- **Strengthening partner autonomy and capacity;** we will work in ways that support and reinforce, not replace, existing capacities and we will transfer resources for learning, research and innovation, programming and policy advocacy work where that is more impactful.
- **Widen and diversify partner base;** we will cultivate and develop partnerships with gender equality institutions that are working for the advancement of the right to food, water and nutrition, especially among small-scale women food producers.
- **Challenging traditional partners;** we will push partners in government, the UN, the private sector, and academia to adopt strategies, tools, models, language and attitudes that advance gender equality and rights to food, water and nutrition for women.
- **Listening to and amplifying voice through partnership;** we will engage in partnerships that ensure the testimony and lived experiences of our impact populations are recorded and shared and who can enable their entry into policy processes and positions of influence.

- **Improving our accountability;** we will identify and manage partnerships based on mutual trust and accountability and we will ensure our aims and work meet both social environmental standards and rights obligations, regardless of focus of work.

## Learning

Our learning agenda in the Right to Food, Water and Nutrition Impact Area will focus on generating, analyzing and presenting evidence and on expanding the impact of that evidence – both for program quality and influencing purposes. The objectives of our learning agenda are to test and refine technologies, approaches and innovations that drive sustainability, productivity, equity and resilience, ; to contribute to learning that improves program quality; and to contribute to policy advocacy, system strengthening and amplifying impact at scale. Our learning will thus be deliberate, and we will leverage organizational, existing and new partner skills and expertise to maximize impact. We will intensify southern partner engagement in our learning processes, and we will reach into new platforms and audiences.

Guided by CARE’s vision for 2030, CARE’s Gender Equality 2030 Strategy and informed by the SDGs, our learning themes, impact pathways, and guiding frameworks and principles revolve around one unifying question:

**In food and water systems, what actions effectively advance gender equality and what impact does gender equality have on the realization of rights to food, water and nutrition?**

In addressing this, we will focus on four areas of inquiry, in line with the Gender Empowerment Framework:

- **Enhancing Gender Equality Programming** - how and why gender equality programming can advance gender equitable and sustainable impacts in food and water systems?
- **Scaling successes in food and water systems** – what are the approaches that work in bringing successful innovations and models (that ensure equity and accountability) to scale in sustainable ways?
- **Addressing challenges in integrated humanitarian and development programming** – how can gender equality approaches<sup>25</sup> and humanitarian action combine to progressively increase resilience and deliver gender justice and the right to food, water and nutrition?
- **Focusing on food and water insecure women and girls**– what are the specific solutions to reducing food, water and nutrition insecurity among vulnerable and marginalized household and communities?

The key synergy opportunity with other impact areas is in collaborating and sharing knowledge on models, approaches and innovations that deliver gender justice outcomes. Ongoing exchange of knowledge and expertise between the Gender, Youth and Livelihoods node and the Gender Justice team on gender and social norm change will be intensified. Knowledge and learning exchange (initiated on integrated programming issues) with the Humanitarian Assistance team will be standardized and ongoing work with Climate Justice and Women’s Economic Justice teams on issues such as adaptation, climate resilient agriculture, entrepreneurship, value chains and financial inclusion will be sustained. In the coming year we will engage colleagues across CARE in elaborating research and learning in the areas described above, seeking to identify and respond to knowledge gaps and to contribute to improved data and evidence bases. For the next three years we will also deploy our learning agenda in the service of the UN Food Systems Summit, which offers unprecedented opportunities to shape the future of our food systems and therefore to achieving the SDGs and realizing the CARE 2030 Vision.

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<sup>25</sup> In certain complex humanitarian circumstances, advancing gender sensitive or gender responsive approaches may be more feasible as transformative action may be precluded in shorter timescales

## Funding

The estimated budget to deliver the 3-year goal is US **\$900 million dollars** (US \$300 M per year) from an ample range of sources, as per this indicative breakdown of donors' specific targets:

US Government	\$300M	Mainly from USAID (Feed the Future, Food for Peace) and USDA
European Union	\$120M	Including ECHO funds, Trust Funds, EIB, and NSAs budget lines
Bilateral sources	\$150M	E.g. Australia, Austria, Denmark, France Germany, Netherlands, UK
UN	\$70M	Mainly WFP, WB, FAO and IFAD
Funds	\$30M	Power of Nutrition, GEF funds, etc.
Foundations	\$230M	E.g. BMGF, PepsiCo, Cargill, Mars, LDS, SFF, Earth Fund, GAP

CARE will aim to keep similar levels of funding from bilateral donors in the food and water sector as in previous years, keeping its rank as one of the three top funded USG funded organizations and a significant recipient of EU funding as well. There will be deliberate efforts to increase access to UN funding (from WB and IFAD, mainly) as well as from foundations, and to diversify private funding, both from corporate and on-corporate foundations, in various markets (e.g. US, Europe, India).

Roughly 40% of the funding will target humanitarian and integrated transition interventions, and 60% development and long-term interventions.

## Resourcing and Impact Area Governance

The **Food and Water Systems (FWS)** team of **CARE USA** will be the global team leading the implementation of this strategy. This leadership function will be undertaken in conjunction with the co-leads (see below) and include the following responsibilities:

Leading, connecting and coordinating the implementation of the impact area strategy	
Roles	Deliverables
Actively exercise internal and external leadership for the impact area	By the third year, 90% of surveyed CARE Members and COs value the leadership for the impact area
Have in place a participatory and diverse working team, mandated to lead the impact area accountable for progressing the outcome	Global team fully staffed
Be an active member of CARE's Program Strategy Team, connecting and working collaboratively together with other impact areas	Active participation in all Strategy Team meetings
Technical assistance and facilitating a network of experts	
Provide technical support and/or facilitate access to expertise and support connecting experts with needs/demands	At least 40 CARE members and Country Offices accessing demand-driven technical assistance on regular basis
Advocate and influence	
Develop and lead on the outcome area advocacy strategy	Advocacy Strategy produced (year1) and fully implemented/assessed (year 3)
Ensure consistent, appropriate and timely messaging directed to key external target audiences	Website and other communication tools regularly updated
Lead on the key networks and alliances in which CARE will take part globally	Leadership on the strategic partnerships with WWF, CGIARs, FAO and IFAD
Fundraising and communication	
Identify key donors relevant to the impact area	Fundraising Plan produced (year one)
Produce/update capacity statements on the impact area	At least 9 capacity statements (one per pathway of change) produced

Support the design of proposals	Proposal designs worth at least \$200 M every year
<b>Measuring impact, managing knowledge and learning</b>	
Produce and disseminate an annual report about the progress of the impact area	3 annual reports produced
Produce and disseminate technical guidelines relevant to the impact area	At least 9 technical guidelines (one per pathway of change) produced
Produce and disseminate regular learning products (such as updates, briefs, 5 minutes of inspiration, webinars, case studies)	Learning products produced for all the pathways of change

Virtually all the +/-40 staff of the CUSA FWS team (directors, technical advisors, KML and MEL advisors, etc.) will dedicate time to some of these functions, leveraging this with their specific responsibilities in the implementation of the CUSA FWS programming. It can be estimated that roughly 20% of the time of the staff (equivalent to the total time of 8 staff) will be focused in the global lead responsibilities.

Teams from across CARE (including member Partners, Regional Offices and Country Offices) will undertake **co-leadership** responsibilities, with specific thematic focuses, based on their existing capacities, background and expertise, allocating staff for this function

<b>Co-lead</b>	<b>Main area of focus</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Care Peru	Water-based ecosystems	1/2
Southern African Region/ECSA	Women smallholders' economic empowerment	1
Care Australia WASH Team	WASH in emergencies	4
CUSA Humanitarian team	FNS in emergencies/humanitarian	2
MENA Palestine-based Hub	Access to markets in fragile contexts	1/2
CUSA Advocacy team	Advocacy	1
Care Caucasus	Rural development	1/4

We are optimistic that this model will build even better collaboration in these areas because of the co-leadership and more seamless support in integrated humanitarian-development, joint fundraising, etc.

A CARE-wide **FWS Steering committee** (FWS SC) will be established, in order to set direction and drive toward the achievement of impact area goals, set policy positions, ensure coordination with the other impact areas and key teams from across CARE, review global strategic partnerships, and make or endorse decisions that affect the strategy as a whole. The FWS SC will be mindful of global representation from CI members, country and regional offices (at least one representative from each region) and representatives from the other impact areas as part of the Vision 2030. We also aim to keep the committee gender balanced and diverse. The FWS SC will meet quarterly and will also review and approve the Impact Area annual reports, and the final report.

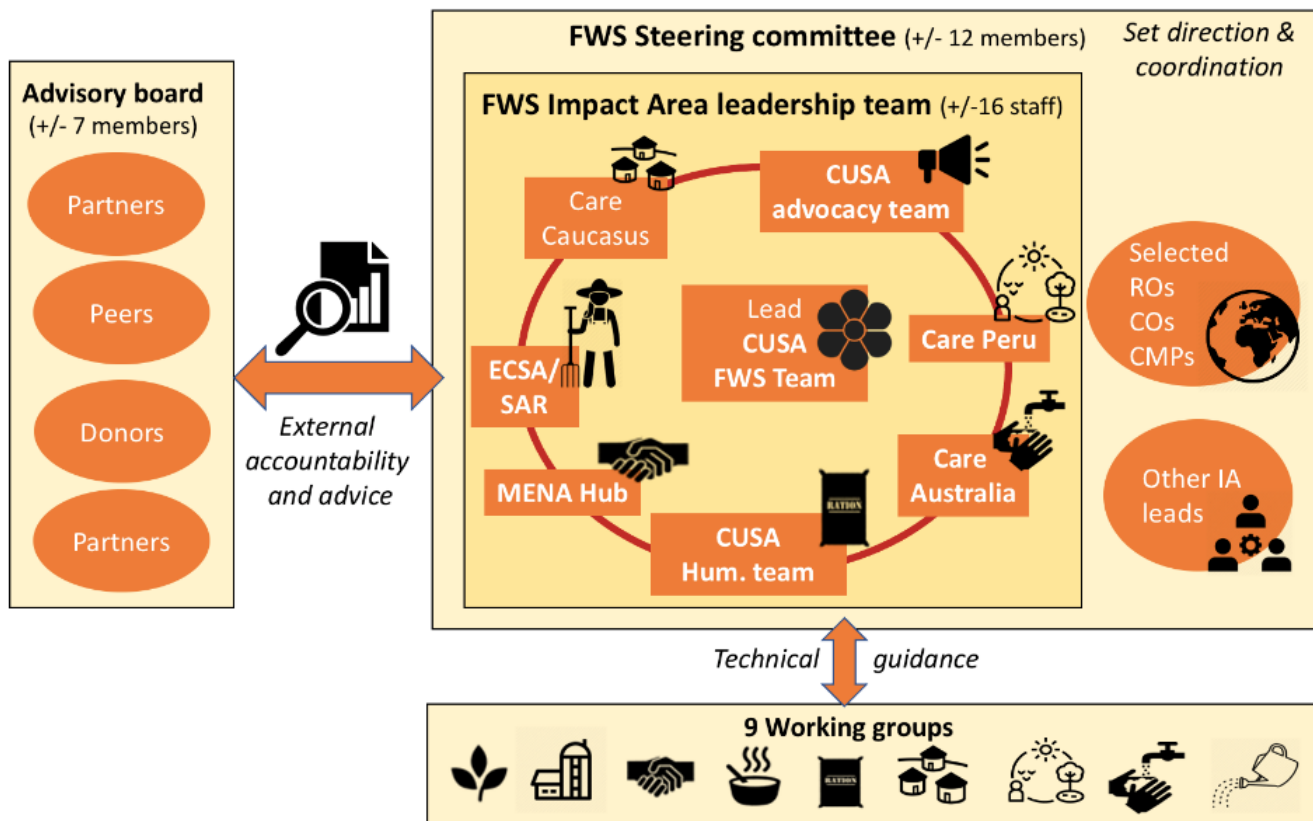
Theme-specific technical **working groups** (WGs) will be established for each of the 9 areas of change, to provide advice and technical guidance if/as needed. Their membership will also be gender balanced and diverse. Terms of Reference will be elaborated for the FWS SC and for the WGs to detail their functions and mandates.

An external **Advisory Board**, of no more than 7 members, will be created to provide non-binding strategic advice on strategy implementation. The Advisory board will meet at least once a year and will be composed by a mix of highly qualified external experts, donors and partners.



Overall, it can be estimated that 16 staff will be required to undertake these leadership functions (8 from CUSA and 8 from co-lead teams).

The required budget for the proposed structures to deliver the global team/role is an estimated \$6 million (\$2 million per year) of which \$2 million would need to be allocated to the lead team \$3 million to the co-lead teams.



## Annex 1.

***Protect and restore water resources and water-related ecosystems***  
matrix describing specific change expected to see in each of the GEF domains

Water+ Objectives	Pathways of Change		
	Build Agency	Change Relations	Transform Structures
<p>Equitable, sustainable access to water, sanitation and hygiene services, for all.</p> <p>Effective and inclusive water resources management and increased water-use efficiency to reduce (stresses of) water scarcity for the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Protect, restore and manage water resources and water-related ecosystems.</p>	<p>Strengthen the capacities, skills and confidence of women to participate in WASH governance at all levels.</p> <p>Strengthen the capacity of women to lead as WASH entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Strengthen to confidence of women and vulnerable groups to demand their right to water services, sanitation solutions and hygiene products.</p> <p>Strengthen the capacities, knowledge and confidence of women to organize and demand improved management and conservation practices.</p> <p>Strengthen the capacities of women to manage and strengthen the resilience of their ecosystems.</p>	<p>Increase women's access to and control over finance for household and entrepreneurial WASH investments.</p> <p>Increase forums in which women can contribute to where and how ecosystems are protected and watersheds are managed.</p> <p>Strengthen spaces for governance and consultation so that women have greater capacity for leadership and for building resilient ecosystems</p>	<p>Ensure that national policies and district practices describe equal rights to water and sanitation.</p> <p>Identify and shift community and institutional, gender and social norms that threaten equitable access and service provision.</p> <p>Ensure that national policies commit to conservation and local practices protect water resources.</p> <p>Strengthen accountability mechanisms between government, WASH services providers, and communities.</p> <p>Identify and shift community and institutional, gender and social norms that threaten over-extraction of water and prevent protection of watersheds.</p> <p>Strengthen accountability mechanisms between government, industry and communities.</p> <p>Promote participation mechanisms with more representation of women and young people to propose adaptation and solutions to ecosystem degradation, water scarcity, pollution and therefore improved access for consumption, irrigation and other productive activities.</p> <p>Establish platforms for dialogue and agreement that, from a "Bottom Up" approach, can influence the adjustment of public policies.</p>