



GROUP INVESTMENT ACTIVITY

Investment Coaching Guide

This is a companion document to [A Guide to CARE's Crisis-Adapted VSLA](#), and a sub-tool of the [CA-VSLA Group Investment Activity Standard Operating Procedure](#).

Use this tool to support CA-VSLA groups in the day-to-day operations and management of their group investment activities.

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Oliver Girard / CARE

Investment Coaching Guide:

Operational and Management Mentoring

This guide provides CARE a structured approach to effectively mentor and coach CA-VSLA groups—and especially GIMCs—in the daily operations and management of their group investment activities. It emphasizes the practical and ongoing elements of business operations, including record-keeping, cash management, roles, group accountability, and risk mitigation.

01 Financial Management and Record-Keeping

OBJECTIVE:

Support groups to establish strong financial practices and accurate record-keeping for effective business operations.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- **Train in Basic Accounting:** Coach GIMC members to manage daily finances, track income and expenses, and maintain up-to-date financial records using the [Investment Ledger](#).
- **Cash Flow Monitoring:** Guide the group to track cash flow to manage operational costs, ensure timely payments to vendors, and identify any financial shortfalls.
- **Balance Checks and Audits:** Conduct regular reviews of financial records, including monthly balance checks, to build trust within the group and ensure transparency.

02 Roles and Responsibilities

OBJECTIVE:

Ensure all members understand and effectively fulfill their roles to maintain efficient business operations.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- **Define Clear Roles:** Help group members define GIMC roles (e.g., Treasurer, Operations Coordinator, Sales Promoters) based on each member's strengths and the business's operational needs.
 - **Role Rotation and Backup Planning:** Encourage regular role rotations to promote skill-building and sustainability, ensuring that all members can cover each other's tasks if necessary.
 - **Accountability Practices:** Coach the group to hold GIMC members accountable for their roles via regular feedback and performance discussions, reinforcing a collective ownership mindset.
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03 Cash Management and Investment Strategy

OBJECTIVE:

Enable groups to manage cash effectively and plan for sustainable growth.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- **Daily Cash Handling Protocols:** Establish and reinforce strict cash handling protocols, including cash safekeeping methods, daily reconciliation, and limited access to cash by designated members only.
- **Investment v. Operating Costs:** Guide the group to differentiate between reinvestment and operational expenses, supporting sustainable business growth.
- **Profit Transfer to Cash Box:** Support and reinforce the importance of following the established profit transfer or reinvestment process.
- **Profit Reinvested in Group Investment Activity:** Assist the group to understand when it may be wise to reinvest some portion of the profit into the group business activity, and to create and follow a process that includes transparent accounting to group followed by group decision to reinvest.

04 Operational Planning and Resource Management

OBJECTIVE:

Help the GIMC streamline its day-to-day business operations to maximize efficiency and profitability.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- **Inventory Management:** Mentor the GIMC on stock tracking, reorder points, and reducing waste through careful resource management to minimize losses and ensure product availability.
- **Scheduling and Work Planning:** Assist

the GIMC to create operational schedules, particularly if members have additional roles within the community or family responsibilities, to ensure consistent operations.

- **Supplier and Resource Relationships:** Coach the GIMC to build relationships with suppliers for reliable resource access and potential cost savings, negotiating terms, and securing favorable deals.
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05 Customer Relations and Marketing

OBJECTIVE:

Support groups to build a customer base and foster repeat business through effective marketing and customer service.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- **Customer Feedback Collection:** Encourage groups to seek regular feedback from customers, and analyze responses to improve products and service offerings.

- **Basic Marketing Skills:** Guide the group to create simple marketing materials, using WhatsApp (or similar) and local events or social gatherings to promote their business, and developing unique selling propositions.
- **Building Customer Loyalty:** Emphasize the importance of consistency in product quality, pricing, and service, helping the group to establish a loyal customer base.

06 Risk Management and Problem-Solving

OBJECTIVE:

Prepare the group to handle operational challenges and mitigate business risks.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- **Risk Identification and Response Planning:** Work with the group to identify potential risks (e.g., supply shortages, low demand periods) and develop response strategies, such as alternative suppliers or seasonal product offerings.
 - **Conflict Resolution:** Coach members on conflict resolution techniques for addressing and managing disputes that may arise within the group or with external partners.
 - **Resilience-Building Exercises:** Engage the group in role-playing exercises or simulations to prepare for potential crises, reinforcing adaptability and resilience.
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07 Continuous Monitoring and Feedback

OBJECTIVE:

Ensure sustainable business growth and improvement by regularly assessing progress and providing constructive feedback.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- **Monthly Progress Reviews:** Hold monthly check-ins to assess business performance, addressing operational issues, and celebrating group achievements.
 - **Adjustments Based on Performance Metrics:** Support the group to adjust business strategies or operations based on key performance metrics, such as profitability, customer feedback, and inventory turnover.
 - **Encouragement and Positive Reinforcement:** Motivate the group by acknowledging successes, providing constructive feedback, and reinforcing best practices.
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08 Tips for Effective Coaching

- **Build Trust and Openness:** Establish a coaching relationship based on trust and open communication, so group members feel comfortable sharing challenges.
- **Adapt to the Group's Capacity:** Adjust the frequency and depth of coaching sessions based on the group's development stage and operational capacity.
- **Encourage Collective Problem-Solving:** Guide the group to solve problems together to reinforce teamwork and shared responsibility.

Crisis-Adapted VSLA Group Investment Coaching Checklist

This form allows CARE staff to track completion dates and capture notes on progress, challenges, and outcomes for each activity, providing valuable insights for ongoing support and improvement.

Activity	Date of Completion	Comments
Financial Management and Record-Keeping		
Ledger established and regularly updated		
Monthly balance checks and audit protocols in place		
Group members trained on basic income and expense tracking		
Roles and Responsibilities		
Clear roles assigned based on members' strengths		
Rotation schedule for key roles developed and shared		
Accountability practices and feedback mechanisms introduced		
Cash Management and Investment Strategy		
Cash handling procedures defined and followed		
Profit distribution, reinvestment, and savings guidelines established		
Monthly profit review and reinvestment plan in place		

Checklist continues on next page...

Activity	Date of Completion	Comments
Operational Planning and Resource Management		
Inventory tracking system established and consistently used		
Work schedule developed and followed to ensure regular operations		
Supplier relationships formed, with negotiated terms for reduced costs		
Customer Relations and Marketing		
Regular customer feedback collection process established		
Basic marketing strategy, including unique selling points, developed		
Customer loyalty practices in place, ensuring product quality and consistency		
Risk Management and Problem-Solving		
Risk identification checklist created and regularly reviewed		
Conflict resolution protocols established within the group		
Resilience exercises conducted to prepare for unexpected challenges		
Continuous Monitoring and Feedback		
Monthly performance review sessions held		
Documented adjustments made based on performance metrics		
Recognition process for group achievements established to encourage morale		