



Farmer Field and Business School

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR MINIMUM STANDARDS

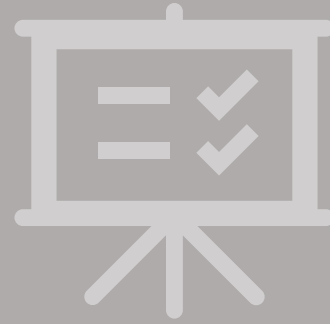
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Introduction



CARE commits to work with partners around the world to support **75 million people, the majority of them women and girls, to fulfill their right to food, water and nutrition** as part of Vision 2030. We will do this by focusing on gender equality and helping women overcome the barriers they face at all levels. We seek a transformative change that allows for a just and more equal world, with structures, relationships, and skills that lead to equality.

CARE draws on decades of work in protecting and enhancing food, nutrition and water security for the most vulnerable. 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, trust, and relationships within national and local governments, partner organizations, and communities around the world.

CARE places **gender justice and the agency of women and girls at the center of its food, water and nutrition work**. Our research has shown that gender transformative approaches have measurable impacts on household economies, empowerment, livelihoods, and resilience. Evidence indicates that FFBS has directly improved the lives of more than 2.5M people (500,000 farmers - 54% women - and their families) and has a solid ramp for impact. 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.

The reality for communities is that food, water, nutrition, health, education and environmental, climate and economic justice are inseparable. Our **multi-sectoral approach** helps address complex challenges across development, humanitarian, and nexus settings. CARE cannot reach these goals alone. We support **civil society partners, feminist organizations, and social movements** by facilitating connections between different stakeholders and transitioning power to more equal relationships and locally led decisions.

How We'll Get There

The Right to Food, Water and Nutrition Impact Area Strategy

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 agency** of people of all genders and life stages, **change relations** between them and **transform structures** in order to realize full potential in their public and private lives and 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 take leadership roles in decision-making and 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.



The Strategy areas of change are distinct but inter-related, like the building blocks of a house with agency, relations, and structures at the foundation.

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

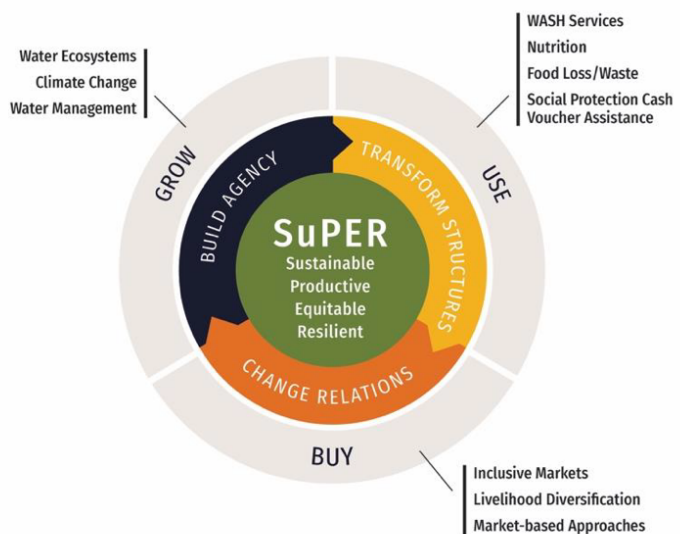
- Everyone has access to sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious food.
- Everyone has access to sufficient, safe, affordable, and sustainably managed water and adequate sanitation.

Transformational change must be equitable and deliver on human rights. 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 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 be able to sustain water access, grow food, and lead sustainable and resilient lives. For women to access the support, resources, and information they need to grow food and income generating products, we will **promote integrated water resources management and ecosystem protection and restoration**. CARE will build on decades of experience in integrated water resources management, climate change adaptation and water-smart agriculture to ensure that communities and governments are addressing and nurturing the ecosystems upon which they depend, while effectively and equitably benefitting from them.

Use resources, approaches, social protection mechanisms and technologies to reduce food loss and waste, increase WASH services, ensure nutrition. In order to effectively use food to create healthy and sustainable diets, we must **address food loss and waste**, leverage our agriculture value chains and markets, inclusive finance and climate resilient agriculture models to impact the lives of small-scale women food producers. We will also work to **improve nutrition** through local collectives, support dietary diversity and promote positive nutrition practices. CARE's work will **increase access to water, sanitation and hygiene services**.

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



We will ensure sustainable services through **systems approaches that include strengthening WASH governance, strengthening capacities of service providers, and addressing social and gender norms** that influence WASH behaviors. We will also **increase leadership of women, girls, and the most marginalized in WASH decision-making**.

Strengthening social protection and building efficient, inclusive local structures and systems will include food aid, school feeding, vouchers, cash transfers and strengthening shock responsive safety nets, and building citizen and provider accountability mechanisms and relationships. That includes **increasing women's access to and control of sustainable productive resources and assets**.

Buy and sell food and WASH-related goods and services in inclusive markets while diversifying their livelihoods and using market-based approaches. This area will focus on **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 and WASH services. CARE will also promote **livelihoods diversification and rural development**.

CARE works with communities facing poverty and marginalization and whose livelihoods are constrained by current food and water 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. The primary focus of this work is **food and water insecure women and girls**.

The Programmatic Framework: She Feeds the World

The RFWN IAS is underpinned by the She Feeds the World (SfTW) unifying program framework, which ensures that interventions are integrated, sequenced, and layered to tackle harmful social norms, structural barriers, and power imbalance. SfTW is based on an integrated model, involving interventions that incorporate gender, governance and resilience as a common approach, across eight areas of change*, each backed with evidence of success, and a range of toolkits and documents behind them.

This integrated approach to improving food, water and nutrition security is based on our experience that change is needed across many, connected areas, for impact to be sustainable and equitable. How can she feed the world without access to water, land, seeds, information, finance, or markets? Equally, how can she feed the world if there are no effective safety nets in place to support her family at times of crisis, or if she received inadequate nutrition as a child or is unable to ensure proper nutrition for her family? How can she feed the world if she has to carry the vast majority of the burden of domestic and care work in her family, is unable to make decisions for herself, or experiences gender-based violence? How can she feed the world if extension services are underfunded or focused only on male-dominated cash-crops? And how can she feed the world, if our work is limited just to the communities where CARE and partners work directly, but do not influence change at much greater scale, through advocacy, partnerships, research, and learning?



The Farmer Field and Business School Approach

CARE's participatory, women-focused **Farmer Field and Business School (FFBS) approach**, one of the leading approaches within the SfTW programmatic framework, helps small-scale farmers build skills necessary to: **Increase production, improve resilience, adapt to climate change, diversify diets and boost nutrition.** The approach also enables farmers to **access markets** and sell at competitive prices, **collaborate** with one another, and **engage in beneficial and efficient decision-making.** FFBS transforms the status and recognition of women by supporting them to be successful farmers, businesspeople, leaders and agents of change.

FFBS is a **hands-on, learning-by-doing approach** which was built on FAO's traditional Farmer Field Schools approach. FFBS is distinct from FSS in that it is **gender transformative**, directly addressing gender biases in agriculture, **holistic** in its approach to skill building rather than focusing strictly on improved agricultural technologies, **integrates technical sessions at periods when they are most critical by following a seasonal calendar**, and redefines the **path to graduation** as groups that have secured



How Pathways participants visualized the importance of integration of the FFBS components (updated based on feedback after implementation in 28 projects).

linkages with key actors and developed strong negotiation skills for collective action to advocate for social and economic changes.

There are **five “main ingredients”** of the FFBS approach:



Groups/collectives: FFBS participants are typically operate in groups made up of 25-30 farmers (may get up to 100-farmers for larger collectives) drawn from diverse collectives including VSLAs, producer groups, marketing groups and other common interest groups that coalesce around the production and marketing of a particular enterprise.



Demonstration Sites: Groups of farmers meet regularly during the course of the production cycle to learn about new agricultural techniques and technologies and to experiment with these treatments on group-managed demonstration plots.



Facilitators: FFBS sessions are led by a trained facilitator who works with a group of community-based trainers, or CBTs (variously called farmer-to-farmer trainers, facilitators, paraprofessionals, junior experts, and community volunteers, as well as frontline private or public agriculture extension workers).



Curriculum: The curriculum builds capacity and essential skills around market engagement including through entrepreneurship and certification, gender equality and empowerment, nutrition practices, participatory performance monitoring, accountability and advocacy for improved access and quality of services.



FFBS Calendar: The training cycle follows the seasonal production cycle, ensuring that learning activities are timed to be applicable to farmers in real-time. Timing sessions according to the seasonal calendar is crucial for maximizing learning and respects the time and schedules of women whose primary occupation is farming.



The integrated FFBS approach is based on the evidence from previous projects' theories of change including Pathways to Empowerment¹, a women in agriculture program implemented in 6 countries, and A Win-Win for Gender, Agriculture and Nutrition: Testing a Gender-Transformative Approach from Asia in Africa², and supporting program data from 27 projects in 17 countries, which illustrate that the integration of these key technical components is essential to transform the lives and livelihoods of the women small-scale producers.

- Strength of the model: The FFBS field transformation model hinges on the holistic integration of program elements, e.g., nutrition, income, yields and gender equality. Improving gender equality impacts sectoral outcomes, and gender transformation has the potential to **catalyze deeper change**.
- Gender equality and women's empowerment: FFBS participants reported the **highest change in number** of people who believe that domestic violence is never acceptable.
- Increased household income: FFBS participants experienced **significant increases** in monthly per capita household income, e.g. from **\$3.41 to \$9.90 in Ghana and from \$11.60 to \$17.38 in Malawi**
- Improved resilience: Even in a year with droughts, cyclones and flooding, agricultural production for FFBS participants increased by as much **as 56% in Tanzania**.
- Better nutrition: Farmers in groups had the **highest proportion of households (62%)** within acceptable consumption scores.

¹ **Tango (2016). CARE Pathways Final Evaluation: Global Report. Retrieved from**

https://www.careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/evaluations/pathways_endline_global_report.pdf **On August 24, 2023.**

² **AGC (2021). Impact Evaluation Report: A Win-Win for Gender, Agriculture and Nutrition Testing a Gender-Transformative Approach from Asia in Africa. Retrieved from**

<https://www.careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/Win-Win-Impact-Evaluation.pdf> **On August 24, 2023.**

Scaling Up the FFBS Approach

Based on its successful expansion rate, CARE is scaling up the FFBS program globally to improve the lives of 25 million farmers and their families from 2022- 2027. This will build on historical evidence on impact while considering existing and future potential programming size.

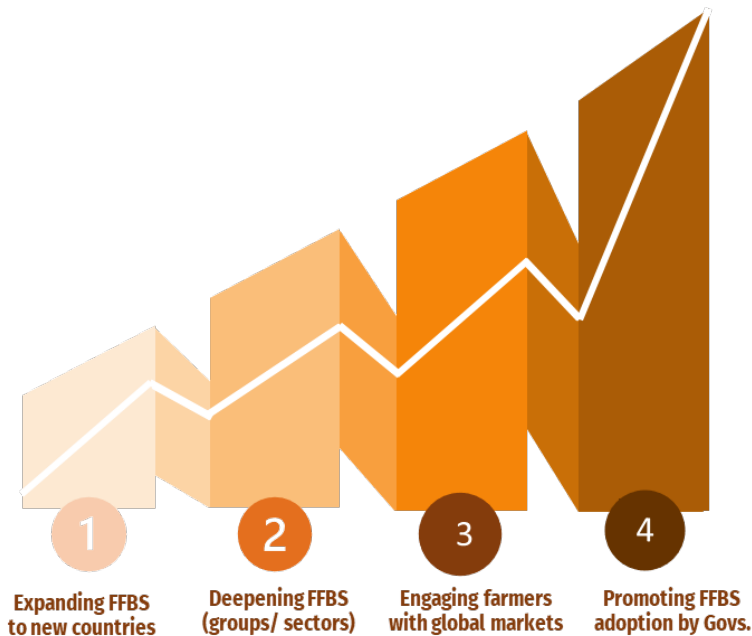
Scaling Up FFBS follows CARE’s **Impact @ Scale six stage process** and qualifies as a high-growth approach with a growing turnover by more than 20% a year over a period of six years with at least 6 countries at the start of the period; aiming at increasing positive socio-economic impact to better correspond to food and nutrition needs identified at targeted countries.

To ensure maximum impact and reach is accomplished, four pathways to growth, sustainability, and impact are being followed:

(1) Expanding the FFBS model in new countries

From 2022- 2027, 25 million small scale producers, a portion of which in expanded agricultural sectors (i.e., pastoralists, livestock growers, and fisherfolks), will be reached through 80,000 newly established groups for FFBS in 18 countries. FFBS will provide demonstrations on improved agricultural practices and facilitate access to participatory capacity-building activities on topics such as sustainable agriculture, marketing and nutrition.

Ideation	Research & Development	Proof of Concept
<p>Stage 1</p> <p>Defining & analyzing the development problem and generating potential solutions through horizon scanning of existing & new ideas</p>	<p>Stage 2</p> <p>Further developing specific innovations that have potential to address the problem</p>	<p>Stage 3</p> <p>When the intellectual concept behind an innovation is field-tested to gain an early, 'real-world' assessment of its potential</p>
Transition to Scale	Scaling	Sustainable Scaling
<p>Stage 4</p> <p>When innovations that have demonstrated small-scale success develop their model & attract partners to help fill gaps in their capacity to scale</p>	<p>Stage 5</p> <p>The process of replicating and/or adapting an innovation across large geographies & populations for transformational impact</p>	<p>Stage 6</p> <p>The wide-scale adoption or operation of an innovation that the desired level of scale / exponential growth, sustained by an ecosystem of actors</p>



(2) Deepening FFBS curricula to increase climate-responsive activities and strengthen links with local markets

CARE's existing and successful curricula will be expanded to provide farmers with additional resources, tools and opportunities to further increase net incomes and enhance livelihoods. Newly added modules will focus on climate justice, women in leadership, and access to finance and loans. Curricula will also cover new agricultural sectors and adapt to fit within each targeted country's context (i.e., humanitarian interventions, refugees, youth). As a

result, an estimate of 70% of targeted farmers – 10.5 million FFBS members – are expected to adopt climate-resilient and sustainable agricultural practices, such as crop rotation, soil and water retention, and composting. In addition, start-up capital will be provided to 500 groups for FFBS to expand their production and potential to access markets through one-time matching investments.

(3) Engaging farmers with global markets via a certification model

Parallel to working with FFBS on local market linkages, the program will pilot a model for FFBS certification in partnership with FairTrade America and other accreditation partners. Certifying small-scale producers can expand their access to global markets and increase the quality, quantity and value of their produce, resulting in higher incomes and enhanced livelihoods. The certification model will help women small-scale farmers be more productive, while also supporting FFBS growth and sustainability. The model will focus on selected markets in the Global North where 60% of consumers noted they were willing to pay a premium for socially responsible products. A total of 500 groups for FFBS are expected to go through the certification model accreditation program.

(4) Promoting the adoption of FFBS by governments

Through the FFBS model, CARE seeks to influence the policies and practices of at least five additional national governments to provide equitable livelihoods and improved nutrition for small-scale farmers, particularly women. Investments in policy analysis and capacity building will enable CARE to jointly work with governments in the Global South to allocate budgetary resources into FFBS to support small-scale farmers more efficiently than traditional models.

CARE is working with a wide constellation of local partners and civil society organizations to maximize the impact of the FFBS program. We are building alliances and partnerships with those who offer complementary approaches and can scale up the model, support the FFBS Accreditation Process, and enhance learning and research around resilience, scale, and gender transformative approaches.

Purpose of the FFBS Guidance Note for Minimum Standards

The FFBS Guidance Note for Minimum standards is targeted for CARE staff, and implementing partners including governments, Non-Governmental Organizations, academic institutions, and multilateral organizations in the agriculture and food system sectors to support their engagement with small-scale producers to multiplying impact at scale through the implementation of FFBS. This guidance will serve as a reference document to understand CARE's work around the Right to Food, Water and Nutrition and it is a reference document for implementing the second edition of the FFBS crop and livestock curriculums. The document is not intended to be applied sequentially, cover-to-cover. It is organized by the key technical components (Facilitation, Collectives, Gender, Sustainable Agriculture, Livestock, Marketing, Certification, Agricultural finance, Food Loss & Waste, Food Safety, Nutrition, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, Community Score Card, Advocacy), all of which align with the key topics in the FFBS toolkit.

As the approach continues to scale globally in a variety of contexts, populations and value chains, the need was recognized to establish “must have” and “nice to have” minimum standards, per thematic area, to maintain the fidelity of the model. This document provides exactly this. In each module, you will find five key sections: Rationale, Theoretical basis, Minimum standards, Guiding principles, and References/guidance documents. The modules in this document are meant to validate and enhance the curriculum within the FFBS Toolkit.

1. Facilitation



Rationale for Facilitation in FFBS

The Farmer Field Business School (FFBS) is a model developed under CARE's Pathways to Empowerment program, which focuses on improving poor smallholder women farmer's productivity and profitability by empowering women to more fully engage in equitable agriculture and food systems. The FFBS model is an integrated, gender transformative and market-based learning-by-doing approach through which groups of farmers meet regularly during the cropping or livestock production cycle to learn about new agricultural techniques and technologies and to experiment these treatments on group-managed demonstration plots. The FFBS training cycle follows the agriculture cycle, ensuring that learning activities are timed to be applicable to farmers in real-time—whether it be a germination test pre-season, or a gender dialogue around workload sharing during the labor-intensive weeding period. Facilitation is very important to the success of this approach as farmers learn by doing, they are adults requiring adult learning techniques, and some components as gender require a special set of skills to lead a community-owned change process. Accordingly, the facilitator requires efficiency and innovation to effectively lead learning, adoption, and transformation.

Theoretical Basis

The Farmer Field and Business School model is an adaptation of FAO's Farmer Field Schools (FFS), and it is a curriculum that is based on adult learning principles that offer practical lessons through participatory approaches. Farmers can then translate this learning and adopt it into their own fields and lives. All the tools in this guide are designed to be participatory, with the facilitator and participants learning from each other through dialogue and knowledge-sharing. Some participants may not be literate or confident in their reading and writing skills, and people also get the most out of learning when they are having fun. As such, some activities in this guide rely on processes such as dialogue, storytelling, role playing, drawing, and games. Sessions are not meant to be lectures or tests – laughter and games create energy and can help maximize learning. These gender tools specifically require a facilitated process for individuals and communities to explore and challenge the social, gender and power norms and practices that shape their lives. The idea is to engage the learners and stimulate them to participate in their own learning and transformation process.

Minimum Standards

The FFBS scale up proposes the following minimum standards for successful facilitation.

Prepare for success

- Follow the seasonal calendar for organizing and delivering sessions to farmers.
- Set the agenda for the training, agree on training date and venue when you deliver the training to CARE and Partners Staff.
- Ensure the date and venue for the training are consultatively agreed upon and considers the needs and priorities of women.
- All sessions should start with an explanation of the objective of the session.

Adult learners have years of experience so never assume they know nothing, thus:

- Take a **participatory & experimental approach** to modules, using simple language, ideas, demonstrations, and learn-by-doing and through comparing approaches and practices.
- **Avoid** lectures because adult learners learn best by seeing and doing. Experiential learning is good for both literate and semi-literate learners.
- Use **simple definitions and clear approaches**. Try to eliminate “trendy” language or overly complicated technical language.
- **Make content relatable** to the local context by linking, adapting, and tailoring content to local conditions, and to farmers existing knowledge and practices, experiences and needs/desires.
- **Engage positive emotions**, such as promoting creative thinking, and expressing joy and surprise over successes, from the smallest to the largest.
- Provide **opportunities for practice and application** of new or adapted methods, including opportunities to apply what has been learned to related challenges that arise.
- Be prepared with the capacity and skills to manage difficult participants – e.g., participants start to leave, one person dominates, participants argue, people are going off topic, etc.
- Focus the group through distributing roles, consensus building, keeping the energy high etc.

The Facilitator - Strong facilitation skills are critical for the success of FFBS.

- Effective FFBS facilitators have the confidence, skills and tools to effectively lead reflection & dialogue about sensitive subjects like sexuality, gender and power. A skilled facilitator should:

✓ Build trust with colleagues and the community.	✓ Manage conflict and tension over sensitive issues and deeply held beliefs.	✓ Encourage interaction and exchange amongst participants.
✓ Summarize dialogue and emphasize key points.	✓ Create welcoming, inclusive, and respectful spaces.	✓ Respectfully manage different points of view.
✓ Avoid using 'messages' but instead use probing skills to prompt critical thinking.	✓ Actively listen, invite everyone to speak up, not interrupting.	✓ Withhold judgment and not discouraging opinions.

Give and Receive Feedback

Facilitation is a skill that requires practice and constructive feedback from mentors and peers. Evaluation and reflection are critical in building your skills and for improving the tools and learning experience.

- **Self-evaluation:** As soon as possible after the session, use the FFBS feedback form to self-evaluate and reflect on what just happened. The self-evaluation form helps you reflect on the process of the dialogue (how you followed the steps outlined above), as well as the skills you displayed in facilitating (the good facilitation tips).
- **Peer and mentoring feedback:** The feedback form can also be used for your colleagues or supervisors to provide you constructive feedback on what went well and what areas might be improved.
- **Group feedback:** You may also want to give participants a chance to evaluate you. This will enable you to understand how your perceptions of your facilitation match participants' experiences. Give participants time at the end of the session to fill out their own evaluation form and reflect on things you did well and things they feel could be improved upon. Also, ask farmers to evaluate the sessions based on different criteria they had defined at the beginning of the training,

Unpacking the Exercises

- FFBS scale up modules are loaded with great tools, games, case studies, and exercises to enhance participants participatory learning process.
- Ensure sufficient time for brainstorming. Give participants time to delve into what just happened by reflecting on actions and experiences.
- Discuss “what does it mean” through reflection and generalization.
- Spend some time focus on “What will we do about it?” to begin planning and application.

Support Community-owned Change Process

Facilitation of FFBS should be driven by a goal of helping communities adopt sustainable agricultural practices (agricultural modules), improve household and community nutrition (nutrition modules), start engaging with input and output market actors (marketing modules), transform discriminatory gender and social norms (gender modules), and take lesson and improve on farmers' status (M&E modules).

This will be possible if facilitators are intentional in helping community members go beyond mere reflection on a topic/an FFBS module and plan for action following the reflection process. Implementation of the action plan that results from that reflection process with support from community stakeholders will make the important stakes of the project clear. This is a key step in facilitation of all FFBS modules and most importantly, facilitators are required to follow the Social Analysis and Action process to help communities plan for action and implement the plan to transform discriminatory gender and social norms.

Facilitation Tools

Below are a few tools from the FFBS Toolkit that can be used as session warming-up activities. Facilitators are encouraged to set the scene through engaging activities before diving into FFBS technical modules facilitation. These facilitation tools can also be used as energizers in between FFBS technical sessions.

- River code
- Race for resources
- Trust walks.
- Pass the message.
- How many eyes? Valuing other viewpoints

Guiding Principles

The FFBS scale up proposes the following guiding principles for successful facilitation.

1. Do no harm: Design and implement group work activities that do not make participants more vulnerable or at increased risk of harm.
 - Do not reinforce harmful gender norms or practices (e.g. shifting household chores and caretaking responsibilities shifting to young girls, as women become more engaged in farming or market activity.)
 - Collectives/FFBS platforms should not oppress marginalized individuals (e.g., are group leaders using their position to take advantage of others?)
 - Partner organizations becoming de-politicized (e.g. do partner organizations feel less able to advocate for rights because they do not have time or feel pressure to keep friendly relations with powerful stakeholders?)
2. Facilitators should reflect the values of gender equality, social inclusion, human rights, tolerance, and inclusiveness: including practicing and demonstrating respectful listening.
3. Be respectful and aware of cultural and religious differences and show respect as you facilitate.
4. Walk the talk for gender equality!

References / Guidance Documents

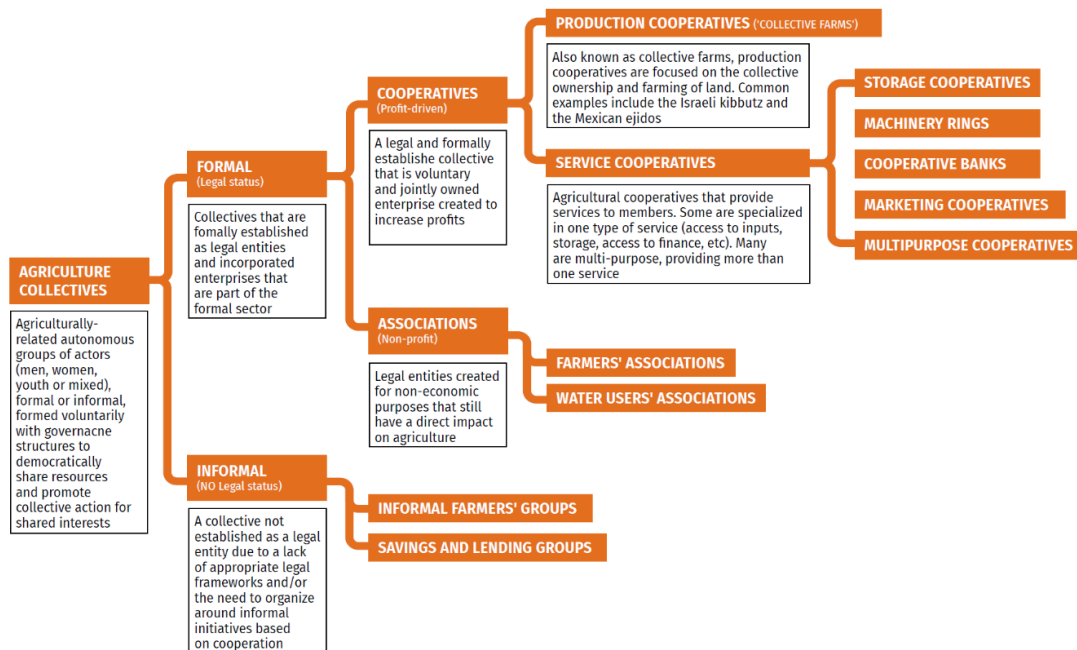
- [CARE's Farmer Field and Business School](#)
- [The 10 principles of Facilitation: A Facilitator's Methodology; Leadership Strategies-The facilitators Company \(2018\)](#)
- [Farmer Field School Guidance Document: Planning for Quality Programs](#)
- [Farmer Field School Methodology: Training of Trainers Manual](#)
- [Global Farmer Field School Platform, Website Library](#)

2. Collectives



Rationale for Collectives in FFBS

Agricultural collectives³ are an important part of FFBS and act as a platform for small-scale farmers, their households and communities to democratically organize around common goals for prosperity and well-being. Collectives play a significant role in building social cohesion and strengthening individual and collective agency; advancing access to and control over resources; changing harmful and discriminatory gender norms; engaging governance structures to change laws; advocating for policy and practices that uphold women’s and youth economic, social and political rights; and driving socio-economic development by providing structures for actors to collectively advance their common interests⁴. Collectives facilitate dialogues that build consciousness of inequalities and skills for collective action, group conscientization and collective empowerment, which is fundamental to overcome poverty, and achieve social justice⁵.



⁴ https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Collectives-report-Final_Screen-1.pdf

⁵ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12157792>.

There are many forms of collectives/cooperatives, both formal and informal, with a variety of purposes. Some of these may include reducing inequality through resource sharing and economic inclusion, creating social capital, sustaining Indigenous socio-cultural values and practices, promoting natural resources management, creating sustainable and agro-ecological food systems, and enabling participation of women and youth in decision-making spaces.⁶

Theoretical Basis

Agricultural collectives can provide benefits to members across different scales of governance and market sectors, improving market outcomes through increased bargaining power, both locally and through networks of cooperatives. This in turn facilitates increased incomes, fairer prices, and better access to markets, inputs, and agricultural extension services⁷.

Working with such structures enhances opportunities for democracy, inclusivity, and operational transparency; higher farmers' profits; improved quality of products and services; lower expenses on input supplies; larger markets and better competition; legal support; as well as their role in broader rural development.

Agricultural collectives have also exercised significant influence on governments to change the foundational policies that create inequities for small-scale farmers, such as market regulations, land tenure, territorial development, and citizenships and human rights⁸.

Similarly, collectives play an important role in increasing members' access to data and information such as climate information services by increasing awareness and uptake of climate information among female members during discussions where women and youth can learn from each other and develop trust in the information⁹.

As an approach, FFBS builds on such existing groups/collectives, both formal or informal, that already have established social capital and governance mechanisms. These include VSLAs, producer groups, self-help groups, producer/market association, and farmer cooperatives.

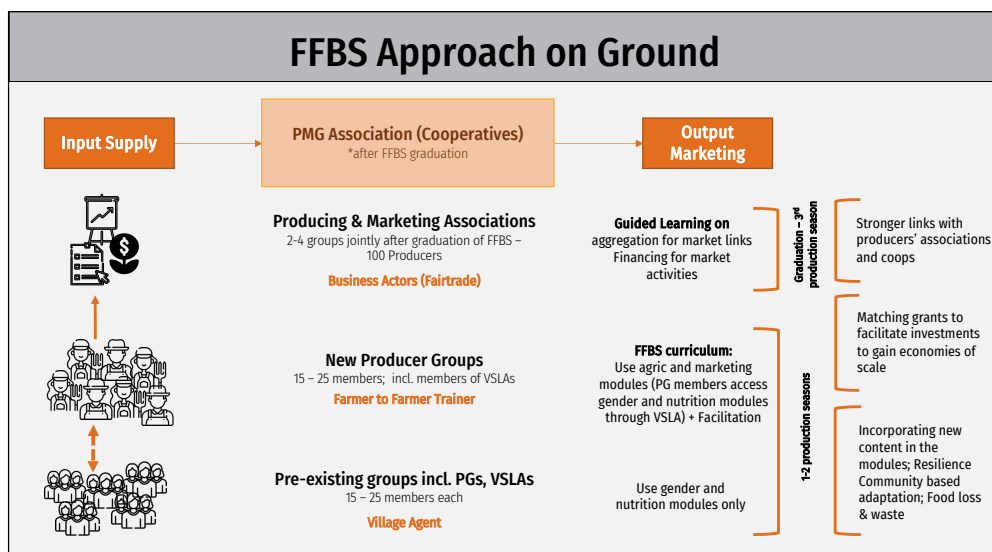
⁶ <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/egms/docs/2016/Coops-2030Agenda/Mendoza.pdf>

⁷ https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10568/57003/Impact_of_agricultural_cooperatives_on_smallholders_technica.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y

⁸ <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/knowledge/-/publication/research-series-issue-29-empowering-through-collectiveaction>

⁹ <https://www.apn-gcr.org/bulletin/article/improving-womens-access-to-climate-information-services-and-enhancing-their-capability-to-manage-climate-risks/>

Foundationally, these established VSLAs, SHG and producer groups, Water User Associations, care/mother groups etc., are the primary entry points for FFBS foundational modules which include gender, nutrition, food loss and waste, CSA/climate adaptation, and financial literacy.



Once specific investment /value chains choices are made by the members, sometimes the formation of alternative groups (e.g. producer groups) around particular investment choices/value chains is deemed necessary. These collectives are trained in more FFBS technical modules including sustainable agriculture, agro-ecology, entrepreneurship/agri-preneurship and business management, collective marketing, and are supported to develop their business plans seeking to generate net profit for the members.

For greater aggregation, consolidation and economies of scale, these collectives are clustered into producer market groups/associations or linked to farmer cooperatives. These present stronger platforms for negotiation with market actors, better access to agri-financing, marketing, and processing services, as well as providing distribution channels for primary agricultural products and services.

Different types of collectives that FFBS interacts with:

- **VSLAs¹⁰**: Self-managed savings groups of 15 to 25 people who meet regularly to save their money in a safe space, access small loans, and obtain emergency insurance. These routinely support each other to set up small businesses, negotiate fair prices in the marketplace, advocate for gender equality in their communities.
- **Producer Groups**: A group of 20-25 small scale producers focusing on particular investment choices/value chain(s).

¹⁰ [https://www.care-international.org/what-we-do/womens-economic-justice/village-savings-and-loans-associations#:~:text=Village%20Savings%20and%20Loans%20Associations%20\(VSLAs\)%20empower%20participants%20to%20increase,overcome%20social%20and%20financial%20barriers.](https://www.care-international.org/what-we-do/womens-economic-justice/village-savings-and-loans-associations#:~:text=Village%20Savings%20and%20Loans%20Associations%20(VSLAs)%20empower%20participants%20to%20increase,overcome%20social%20and%20financial%20barriers.)

- **Self Help Groups**¹¹: Self Help Groups are groups of 10 to 20 women or men who want to improve their living conditions by setting up their own savings and loan fund. Beyond their function as savings and credit groups, SHGs offer poor women a platform for building solidarity. They allow women to come together and act on issues related to their own lives including health, nutrition, governance and gender justice.
- **Producer Marketing Groups**: These are clusters of 4-5 producer groups, with the aim of collective engagement with the market through aggregation, negotiation and collective transaction.
- **Farmer/Producer Associations**: These are legal (registered) farmer organizations for collective action to boost farmer productivity and bargaining power, farm management skills, household welfare and livelihoods, and rural development. These can have hundreds to thousands of members.
- **Farmer Cooperatives**: An Agricultural Cooperative, also known as a farmers' co-op, is a cooperative in which farmers pool their resources in certain areas of activity. Agricultural cooperatives play a key role in linking farmers to markets, providing a collective platform for negotiating with buyers, offering aggregating, marketing and processing services, providing distribution channels for primary products, and delivering training, business planning and capacity building services.
- **Community Water Committees**: These local committees are volunteers who ensure the continued functionality of water services in a community. They usually have some level of training on fund/fee management, minor repairs, and contracting a technician for major repairs. The water committee often is a liaison between the community and the local government regarding water. Some committees may also work on environmental protection or conservation for integrated water resources management.

Minimum Standards

The essentials (must have):

- **Embedded in the Community**: To encourage participation, reduce mobility challenges for the disadvantaged (especially women and youth), it is critical to situate the collective activities right in the community where producers come from.
- **Participatory Governance**: The collective is participatory in character, with leadership spread widely across members to ensure equity in decision-making. The collectives comprise up to 10 members in an Executive Committee elected by all the members of the group, which oversees functioning, regular meetings, implanting business plans etc. Both men, women and youth are represented in the decision-making structure.

¹¹

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_116168.pdf

- **Provide Opportunities for Disadvantaged Producers:** These collectives are platforms for small scale producers, facilitated to serve the interest of small producer, especially women and youth. Most members (80 percent) must therefore be small-scale producers. A sprinkling of medium and large farmers can purposefully be made part of the collectives as they generally bring more resources, better market connectivity and have a larger appetite for the risk needed for starting an enterprise. These advantages are expected to have a positive spillover effect on the small producer. They pre-empt the familiar problem of ‘elite capture’ of the institution by the large farmers, whose proportionate number is kept low and whose representation in the executive body is also kept in fair balance with small producer members.
- **Must have Profit-Oriented or Social Enterprise Goals:** VSLA, PGs, Clusters, Associations must develop their business goals and plans seeking to generate net profit for the members chiefly from the lower cost of input procurement and deriving higher income from improved market access. A vital part of the training of collectives is to help them develop and implement their specific business plan/ so that members have strong financial motivation to remain in the group.
- **Gender Equity:** Gender equality is central to collectives’ success, and steps should be taken to promote women’s and youth leadership and participation. Each FWS program should layer continuous, facilitated dialogues that address gender discrimination, stereotypes, norms and practices within VSL and producer groups. Women should take part in strategic decision-making and FFBS gender dialogue tools should be used alongside SAA to explore thematic areas such as GBV, decision making, time use and workload burden, forms of gender discrimination and power analysis. Women and youth membership and leadership should be intentional and rotational, thus sharing the opportunity to practice leadership skills in a supportive environment.

Secondary actions (nice to have):

- **Aim for Aggregation for Economy of Scale:** Recognizing that economy of scale in demand for input and in marketing of produce constitutes the main barrier to income enhancement for small producers, the collectives’ approach is intended to overcome this. This will improve better access to quality input at a lower price and increase marketability of the produce. This is critical for cost reduction in input procurement through demand aggregation of the members, as well as the marketability of the produce, which remains a persistent challenge.
- **Quality Facilitators, Agents and Service Providers:** In order to inspire, encourage, guide, train, make connections, and fill knowledge gaps, facilitators and field agents (whether VAs, market brokers, Farmer to Farmer trainers etc.) play a critical role in collectives. It is fundamental to have well qualified, trustworthy facilitators with pedagogical and adult learning skills.

Guiding Principles

- **Do No Harm:** While reinforcing investments and interventions in farming and animal husbandry through collectives is crucial to food and nutrition security, it critical to safeguard negative effects and impacts on the vulnerable populations, natural resources, health and environmental degradation, and exacerbating inequalities.

References / Guidance Documents

- Gender Equality is a Human Right.
- The Role of Cooperative in Empowering Indigenous People and Older Persons.
- Impact of Agricultural Cooperatives on Smallholders' Technical Efficiency.
- Empowering through Collective Action.

3. Gender



Rationale for Gender in FFBS

Food insecurity is commonly ascribed to poverty. In 1996, food security was defined by the FAO as when people have physical and economic access to food that provides the nutrients to meet dietary needs to achieve a healthy life. This concept is gender unaware; while in some places, gender inequality is considered a cause and consequence of food insecurity, many more dialogues are leaving aside the importance of gender equality on food security. CARE International's work and messaging on global hunger asserts that despite women being responsible for 90% of preparing and buying food, they are eating last and least. As of 2021, there are 150 million more women who are food insecure than men in the world¹². Access and control to productive resources, such as land, water, livestock, seeds, or fertilizers, is a key contributor to food security. Studies in Malawi, Tanzania, and Nicaragua found that gender norms defining women's participation in income generation activities impact food security. Studies also indicate that gender equality has a strong relationship not only on increasing the capacity of rural households to acquire coping mechanisms, but also to reduce poverty and food insecurity¹³. A study by UN Women, World Bank, UNDP and UNEP on the Cost of the Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda revealed that closing the gender gap in agricultural productivity could potentially lift as many as 238,000 people out of poverty in Malawi, 80,000 people in Tanzania, and 119,000 people in Uganda¹⁴

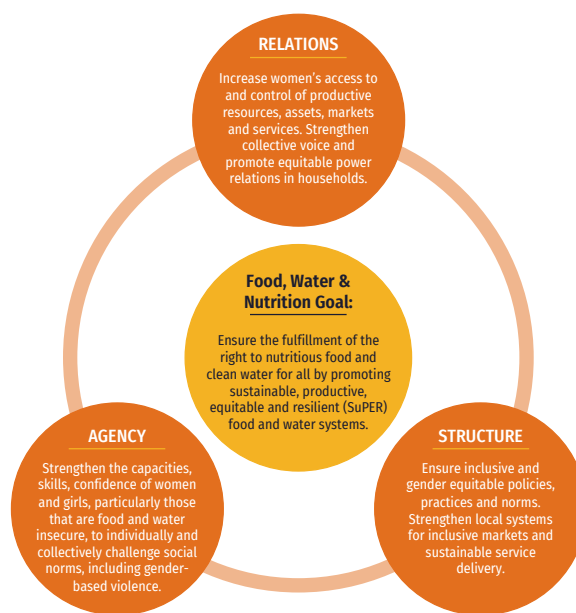
In this regard, CARE believes that in order to make meaningful and lasting impact at scale, we must tackle underlying causes of poverty and injustice. Gender inequality is a key driver of poverty as well as one of the most widespread forms of injustice, which is why we put gender at the center of our work. The Farmer Field and Business School (FFBS) is a model developed under the CARE's Pathways to Empowerment Program. The FFBS is an integrated, gender-transformative and market-based extension approach that helps small-scale producers build skills necessary to increase production; access markets and sell at competitive prices; collaborate with each other; and engage in beneficial and efficient decision making. Gender is one core component of FFBS and it is implemented through the gender transformative **Social**

¹² <https://www.care-international.org/news/150-million-more-women-men-were-hungry-2021-care-analysis-finds>

¹³ <https://www.careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/Final-Version-Food-Security-and-Gender-Equality.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/847131467987832287/pdf/100234-WP-PUBLIC-Box393225B-The-Cost-of-the-Gender-Gap-in-Agricultural-Productivity-in-Malawi-Tanzania-and-Uganda.pdf>

Analysis and Action Process. FFBS transforms the status and recognition of women by providing the support they require to be successful farmers, businesspeople, leaders, and agents of change. Evidence from CARE's evaluation reports and learning briefs shows that participation in the FFBS builds women's self-confidence and expands their autonomy; reduces gender-based violence; and engenders respect from their families and communities towards them.



Theoretical Basis

Gender Transformative Approaches have become prominent in the gender and development literature¹⁵ and gained traction in the agriculture and rural development sector in recent years. The paradigm shift involves identifying challenging and changing structural barriers, including the discriminatory social and gender norms and practices within individuals, groups, and institutionalized in policies, with the aim of achieving transformative change. The GTA responds to a call for an alternative to the business-as-usual approach to gender in development programming. As such, the GTA aims at addressing imbalanced power dynamics and relations, constraining gender norms and roles, harmful practices, unequal formal and informal rules as well as gender-unaware or discriminatory legislative and policy frameworks that create and perpetuate gender inequality at different levels (agency, relations, and structures).

Restrictive gender norms and unequal power relations and structures limit human development by creating and reinforcing assumptions and systems of privilege. These can also be codified in law and policy. These norms and hierarchies are constructed by people, reinforced by communities and societies at large, embedded in social structures, and systematically privilege some groups over others.

CARE's Gender Transformative programming is based on catalyzing change across three domains in line with CARE's **Gender Equality Framework**. As illustrated, 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 people of all genders 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.

¹⁵ https://www.kit.nl/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Gender-Transformative-Approaches-in-Agriculture_Platform-Discussion-Paper-final-1.pdf

Implementation of gender transformative FFBS can only be achieved through ensuring sustainable changes across the GEF domains of 1) Building Agency 2) Changing Relations and 3) Transforming structures in both formal and informal spheres as demonstrated by the below table:

	Agency	Relations	Structures
Formal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and skill building: -Sustainable agricultural practices -Improving individual and family nutrition -Input and Output Markets -Financial literacy -Gender dynamics and social and gender norms -Menstrual Hygiene, reproductive health and rights -DRR -Livelihoods -Leadership -Positive Youth Development -Female and Male Youth personal development plans -Business skills to engage in IGAs -Practical knowledge of law and self-confidence to claim rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Group membership and leadership – VSLAs, PGs, PMGs, Cooperative, water user associations, marketing committees, Mother-to-Mother groups/Care groups, local community groups, - Quota system/affirmative action to have women in key leadership positions -Engage community leaders to influence the agenda for having more women representatives -Freedom and support to form coalitions and jointly claim rights and hold duty bearers accountable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural, natural resources, nutrition and gender policies, strategies, laws, programs and services – advocacy for inclusion and equity -Accountability of gov service providers to women producers -Gender responsive budget allocation and utilization -Gender audit and organizational policies and strategies that promote gender equity -Gender marker to demarcate status and progress on gender equity within a domain -Existence of restorative justice systems, referrals, and structures for GBV survivors -Inclusive market systems focusing of financial Service Providers, input suppliers, buyers, and certifiers
Informal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence, Self-esteem: -definition of self-empowerment -aspiration for oneself -group aspiration -Ability to negotiate HH workload sharing -Life-skills -Positive image of women as workers, entrepreneurs and leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Engage men and boys as change agents for gender equality: e.g. HH decision-making on nutrition, duty-sharing, access to and control over productive resources, income and asset control. -Couples dialogues for promoting harmony in the house, communication -Changing individual and group attitudes towards women -Group aspiration, visioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Engage traditional leaders and influential community members to challenge and transform discriminatory social and gender norms around access to land, water and other productive assets and resources -Harmful traditional practices supported by informal sanctions. E.g. child marriage, FGM, IPV, menstrual taboos -Organizational culture promote gender equality through staff transformation -Social and gender norms – analysis, reflection, action

Minimum Standards

The essentials (must have):

CARE's FFBS scale up employs the Social Analysis and Action (SAA) approach as the main FFBS implementation approach for its gender component. SAA is a facilitated process through which individuals and communities explore and challenge the social norms, beliefs and practices that shape their lives and are at the root of the development problems that CARE seeks to address. In this regard, therefore it is key that the following minimum standards guide countries and Partners implementing FFBS to ensure coherence. Below are the minimum standards required for countries implementing the Scaling Up FFBS Program:

- **Staff Transformation:** As CARE staff team, it is important to build staff and culture committed to gender equality. Everyone including CO Gender specialists, project gender specialists, also have a responsibility to ensure that CARE upholds culture committed to gender equality. Accordingly, CARE and Partner staff including frontline workers should undergo staff transformation through:
 - SAA reflective practice which allows staff to: Reflect on their own biases and beliefs that influence work and enhance their comfort to talk about sensitive issues! Build staff capacity to facilitate SAA process and utilize SAA/FFBS tools.
 - Ensure staff capacity building on mandatory Gender Equity and Diversity/Reflection on Equity Diversity and Inclusion training at the beginning of the program and refreshers as needed together with induction to new staff.
- **Gender Analysis**
 - It is important for a project to carry out a gender analysis that includes conducting a desk review at a minimum to identify gender concerns and social inclusion issues within the context of the project implementation. Review policy and legal frameworks, gender platforms, gender statistics in Agriculture etc. Gender, social inclusion, and social norms analysis is a starting point and mandatory for any project intending to integrate gender transformative approaches in their project and implementing FFBS scale up. Resources for carrying out a gender, social analysis and social norms analysis should be allocated at project design and proposal development. The CARE's **Good Practice Framework for Gender Analysis**, shall be used for the Gender, Social Inclusion and Social Norm Analysis.
 - The report should have recommendations based on which a project team should develop a Gender Integration strategy and Gender Action Plan for the specific program. The strategy and action plan will need to encompass both gender integrated (take action against unmet needs or gender discrimination) and gender specific activities (*Specific Gender Activities to Advance Gender Equality* This refers to targeted activities designed to challenge gender inequality in the domains of CARE's Gender Equality Framework).
- **FFBS ToT Training followed by stand-alone GTA/SAA training and SAA.**
 - The FFBS ToT provides a better understanding of the FFBS approach, including how the different components relate and are implemented throughout the FFBS calendar.

- GTA and SAA stand-alone training. SAA is the FFBS implementation approach implementing FFBS and for gender dialogues.
- Ensure qualified SAA trainers/facilitators are involved to facilitate the SAA training to ensure coherence in delivery of SAA content. This includes both staff and project facilitators (frontline staff) and they should receive regular support and mentorship on facilitating gender reflections and dialogues.
- Using the SAA process, facilitate critical reflection and dialogue using the gender tools (that you could select based on assessment results) and also a wide range of selections from the FFBS toolkit and SAA in FNS Manual.
- Use the Gender Marker and its vetting form to regularly assess the level of gender integration within the project aiming to achieve gender transformative in the integration continuum.
- **Engage communities in community owned-change process.** Support communities to develop and implement gender action plans for shifting discriminatory gender and social norms and work towards its adaptation and scale up through FFBS.
- **Work with women-led organizations** and support women and girls to mobilize themselves and advocate for their rights and protection.
- **Engage Men and Boys.** Engaging men and boys is a crucial component of Gender Transformative work. Be intentional in integrating Engage Men and Boys synchronization models as part of FFBS. Support establishment of men's peer groups, networks, champions creating platforms for them to share stories and testimonies of change.
- Integrate GBV prevention, response and referral activities.
- Staff Capacity building on **Outcome Mapping** to collectively measure progress.
- **Gender transformative MEL system**
 - Gender transformative objectives and results, women's empowerment and gender equality target indicators, and other indicators disaggregated by sex, age.
- Ensure projects implementing FFBS scale up have Gender focal person/officer.

Secondary actions (nice to have):

- Build staff capacity on the **Social Norms Analysis Plot (SNAP)** for social norm analysis and measurement.
- To have **Gender Specialist** to coordinate gender transformative activities within the project and with partners.
- In an event that an FWS program focuses on one or more components of FFBS and not all in implementation, ensure the **integration of the gender tools**.
- Design a social norm intervention targeting reference groups and decision-makers of norms based on the CARE Social Norms Design Checklist.
- Organize community-wide sensitization events to promote gender equality using key national and international celebrations such as IWD, 16 days of activism, or farmers day etc.
- Ensure gender is visible and explicit in reporting and documentation including in **advocacy and communication messaging**.
- Produce and share **learning briefs** on GTAs and social norm programming.

- Produce significant **change stories/human interest stories** on gender transformative achievements at individual, household, community, institutional levels, and share.
- Build women’s capacity towards their **involvement in public decision-making**.
- Integrate women’s empowerment measurement tools (e.g. Pro-WEAI) in the project MEAL plan and report on women’s empowerment and gender parity.
- Staff Transformation Tracker: Monitor staff transformation using the Personal Transformation Tracker to promote accountability, integrity, and solidarity in the delivery of CARE’s gender interventions.

Guiding Principles

- **Do no harm:** Design and implement activities that do not make participants more vulnerable or at increased risk. Continuously monitor and scan for risks. Pay special attention to:
 - Gender-based violence – shifts in household relations can sometimes create tension or conflict (e.g. does increased income for women instigate fear or resentment from men that turns into violence?). If monitoring through a survey, questions should not ask about personal experience of GBV, instead ask: “Do you feel that GBV has increased, decreased or stayed the same in your community in the last months? Why?” or “Do you think women who have access to financial services experience less domestic violence or more, or just the same as those who don’t have access?”. You could also ask attitudinal questions (of men and women): “Do you think it’s normal for men to beat their wives?”
 - Reinforcing harmful gender norms or practices (e.g. are household chores and caretaking responsibilities shifting to young girls, or are other adults taking on these duties as women become more engaged in farming or market activities?)
 - Whether collectives/FFBS platforms exclude or oppress marginalized individuals? (e.g. are group leaders using their position to take advantage of others? Are there people in the community that are not permitted to join – or perhaps do not feel comfortable joining?)
 - Partner organizations becoming de-politicized (e.g. do partner organizations feel less able to advocate for rights or feel pressure to keep friendly relations with powerful stakeholders?)
- **Collectives or FFBS platforms should reflect the values of gender equality, social and economic equality, human rights, tolerance, and inclusiveness: Characteristics** of collectives should reflect these values. Governance within the collective should be transparent and accountable to its members. Women should be part in strategic decision-making. Leadership should be rotational, thus sharing the opportunity to practice leadership skills in a supportive environment.
- **Embed reflective practices** within the project’s monitoring system to ensure that staff have the time and space to honestly reflect on what changes they are observing in the community, how the project is progressing, and brainstorm needed changes. This should be an on-going practice throughout the life of the project.

References / Guidance Documents

- [Social Analysis and Action Global Implementation Manual](#)
- [Social Analysis and Action in Food and Nutrition Security Programming](#)
- [Social Analysis and Action Overview Brief](#)
- [Do No Harm Manual](#)
- [Guidelines for Measuring Gender Transformative Change in the Context of Food Security, Nutrition, and Sustainable Agriculture](#)
- [Food Security and Gender Equality](#)
- [Pro-WEAI Market Inclusion.](#)
- [Facilitation Guide for the Gender Equity and Diversity Training Curriculum](#)
- [Farmer Field and Business School](#)
- [FFBS Evaluation Reports](#)
- [The Cost of the Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda](#)
- [Implementing Gender Transformative Approaches in Agriculture](#)

4. Sustainable Agriculture



Rationale for Sustainable Agriculture in FFBS

The Sustainable Agriculture thematic area takes an integrated, holistic, and participatory approach to sustainable agriculture. The Sustainable Agriculture tools aim to put farmers in control of experimenting, learning and building confidence and agency to make decisions. The tools provide the opportunity to acquire new technical information and gain new knowledge, while building on traditional and existing knowledge and skills to achieve impactful results and greater resilience. The Sustainable Agriculture tools aim to stimulate farmer problem diagnosis, inquiry, and identification of new and innovative methods to build local knowledge of practices that support adaptation to climate change and development of long-term sustainability. Critically, the tools are designed to be adapted to address gender-based inequities in the way practices are introduced, discussed, shared, promoted and adopted.

The practices found in the Sustainable Agriculture tools can be scaled for various sizes of farms, including communal lands and homestead gardens, and can and should be adapted to local context. An integrated approach to sustainable agriculture aims to: increase food production, produce safe foods, increase food security and improve nutrition, provide appropriate approaches for adaptation, increase climate resilience, expand market opportunities and improve incomes, protect and enhance natural resources, safeguard biodiversity, and, where appropriate, increase carbon capture and storage. These outcomes are based on CARE's principles of engagement in small-scale agriculture which are effectively to seek impact that is sustainable, productive (yielding profit as well as healthy diets), equitable and resilient (SuPER).

Theoretical Basis

Sustainable Agriculture

Sustainable agriculture plays a critical role globally, serving as the backbone of economic systems, and feeding the global population, which is projected to be 9.7 billion people by 2050. Additionally, sustainable agriculture plays a very important role in the health of the environment and is essential to addressing climate change.

There are many definitions, interpretations, and ideas of what sustainability in agriculture means. A common understanding of sustainability in agriculture is the ability to “meet society’s food and textile needs in the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” 16

Ultimately, sustainable agriculture aims to “sustain farmers, resources and communities by promoting farming practices and methods that are profitable, environmentally sound, and good for communities.”¹⁶

There is a general agreement that in order for agriculture to be sustainable, it must:

- Improve economic profitability, which includes increasing access and competitiveness to markets, as well as creation of job and income-generating opportunities.
- Protect and enhance environmental health and integrity, which includes protecting and enhancing natural resources, and creating and maintaining a diverse, healthy ecosystem.
- Boost social and economic equity, which includes focusing on gender equality, strengthening skills and opportunities, improving livelihoods, improving nutrition and food safety, and is inclusive of local knowledge.

Problem Statement

CARE recognizes that there are many underlying and complex challenges to achieving sustainability in agriculture, as well as global food, water and nutrition security. In 2023, the FAO conducted a study that illustrates that 857 million people worked in primary agricultural production. Of that total, women account for 43 percent of agricultural labor. Yet women’s access to land, inputs, education, and other services falls far behind men. Additionally, women’s roles are often marginalized and working conditions tend to be worse for women than men¹⁷. It is critical to close the gender gap in agriculture in order to increase food production, build livelihoods for women, and contribute to healthier communities and a resilient planet.

Beyond the challenge of gender-based inequity, lack of dietary diversity, climate change and demographic change, sub-optimal (and often declining) production, inadequate maternal and child health services, poor water and sanitation practices, and changing and unsustainable consumption and diet patterns are some of the considerable and often inter-related challenges. Moreover, efforts to achieve food security through agriculture are often undertaken in ways that are rapidly destroying the planet’s terrestrial and marine resources. Food security depends, among other factors, upon sustainable agricultural output to ensure a primary source of food and income. However, increases in agricultural productivity and production do not necessarily lead to improvements in food security, nutrition, or environmental health. Therefore, any support to small-scale agriculture must be nutrition sensitive and seek nutrition outcomes, as well as be ecologically sound.

CARE is aware that global food systems, driven by an economic model that has placed considerable power within agri-business and has made terms of trade unfair, are also grossly inequitable and unjust. This inequity affects both agriculture and climate change. Predominant agriculture models in much of the world see agriculture as commodity-oriented and are thus driven by commercial value chain approaches. Small-scale or subsistence farmers that are not in such value chains are tolerated at best and often

¹⁶ <https://western.sare.org/about/what-is-sustainable-agriculture/>

¹⁷ <https://www.fao.org/3/cc5343en/cc5343en.pdf>

completely neglected. While providing food, water, nutrition and income security, sustainable agriculture systems should also help address the underlying causes of poverty and social injustice by promoting gender equality and women's voice, inclusive governance, and resilience to climate change and other shocks and stresses. For these reasons, CARE's work on both agriculture and climate change is heavily based on rights-based and justice approaches.

Additionally, it is critical to recognize that agriculture varies dramatically from place to place, influenced by local agro-ecological and climatic conditions, socio-cultural norms and barriers, economic trends, and institutional and policy settings. There is generally too little attention to inequality and to the systemic and institutional challenges that prevent agriculture systems from becoming more just and sustainable.

Finally, many agricultural paradigms address challenges and propose solutions, but there are challenges in the ways these approaches are promoted, as "catch-all" approaches. There are various approaches to agriculture for development, and debates often pit one against another. While increases in production and productivity are important and possible, CARE stresses the resilience and agency of farmers themselves, as well as an integrated approach that is adaptable and builds long-term solutions.

Integrated Solutions

For all of these reasons, it is critical to take an integrated, holistic and participatory approach to sustainable agriculture. Agriculture systems can and should simultaneously contribute to sustainability, productivity, equity and resilience. This allows agriculture to help achieve food and nutrition security, while addressing the needs of small-scale food producers and women living in poverty. CARE works to integrate its approaches to ensure that all four SuPER principles are respected and are based on whole systems approaches and rights-based approaches.

An essential component to sustainable agriculture is acknowledging the powerful role of existing and traditional knowledge and recognizing practices that have sustained humans and the earth for generations. Researchers and policymakers agree that adapting agriculture to impacts of climate change is necessary to ensure food security, while evidence shows that "indigenous people's knowledge and perception help devise locally relevant and sustainable climate change adaptation strategies."¹⁸ A powerful method is using a complementary approach of existing local knowledge and expertise, with increased access to resources, assets and agricultural education, to strengthen knowledge and skills and have a greater positive impact on sustainability and changing climate.

Experts also agree that it is "vital that we transform our agricultural and food systems so that they work with and not against nature," and that sustainable agriculture "focuses on ecosystems-based approaches which can help to boost human well-being, tackle climate change, and protect our living planet"¹⁹. A truly

¹⁸ <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fclim.2022.1067630/full>

¹⁹ <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/agroecology-contribution-food-security>

sustainable approach to agriculture production is one that protects agrobiodiversity and ecosystem services,” and values food sovereignty and genetic resources (including seed sovereignty).

The techniques found in the FFBS Sustainable Agriculture tools are based on proven science- and research-based approaches²⁰, as well as adult learning methods for sustainable agriculture that aim to:

1. **Successfully set up demonstration plots** in a manner that encourages participation, hands-on learning (including critical observation and record-keeping skills), and illustrates challenges and successes of experimental practices.
2. **Increase production planning knowledge and skills**, in order to maximize use of land for production, increase knowledge on sustainable practices, determine practices, observe challenges and successes over time, as well as set goals.
3. **Improve recycling**, by promoting the use of local, renewable resources for sources of nutrients and biomass.
4. **Reduce dependency on, and cost of, external and purchased inputs**, through the creation of natural inputs, which increases access, ownership and income-generating opportunities with inputs.
5. **Improve soil health and nutrient management**, as well as carbon storage, by using conservation approaches to increase organic matter, nutrients, and living soil microorganisms.
6. **Conserve and protect water** sources and reduce the amount of water required.
7. **Protect and enhance biodiversity**, including diversity of crops and other plants, genetic resources, as well as protecting and attracting critical pollinators.
8. **Enhance positive ecological interactions** and synergy between agroecosystems, which include humans, plants, animals, trees, soil and water.
9. **Improve harvest methods and handling practices**, as well as **post-harvest practices** and sanitation that improve food crop longevity and increase food safety.
10. **Reduce food loss** during production, harvest and post-harvest stages with improved practices,
11. **Support economic diversification and increased market opportunities** and linkages, as a result of improved and adapted sustainable crop production, crop diversification, and safer practices.

The FFBS Sustainable Agriculture tools provide education and guidance on the most critical and foundational components of sustainable agriculture, from a multitude of disciplines and paradigms, to develop tailored solutions. The disciplines include the following: Water Smart Agriculture (WaSA), climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and climate-resilient agriculture (CRA), agroecology, regenerative agriculture, conservation agriculture, carbon farming, and nature-based approaches. The FFBS integrated approach to using the Agriculture Tools in combination with the other tools (gender, market, nutrition and more) allows for a holistic approach to increasing overall resilience of farm, farmer, and community.

²⁰ <https://www.agroecology-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Poster-13-principles-of-Agroecology.pdf>


Minimum Standards

The essentials (must have):

- **Become familiar with the sustainable agriculture tools, in advance.** The tools are divided into five sections, with multiple modules per section. Some modules are absolutely necessary in order to set up and manage a successful FFBS demonstration plot. Other modules have educational information and multiple technical options to choose from and can be viewed as a technical reference. It is important to remember that learning and adoption of new practices occur over time; therefore, it is recommended to introduce new concepts and experiment with new practices over time, based on the group’s own knowledge, existing practices and needs.
- **Provide options.** There are many technical approaches throughout the tools. Often, even within one module, there are options listed. Use these references to experiment with new ideas and/or strengthen existing approaches.
- **Prioritize collaboration.** It’s essential to work with food systems specialists, climate service providers, local agriculture extension agents, crop experts on specific value chains, research institutions, universities and more (especially who focus on various approaches to sustainable agriculture).
- **Explore mechanisms and resources for evidence-based adaptation.** FFBS needs to adapt to changes in farmer context or needs through contextually appropriate farmer-led learning/action platforms and extension services.
- **Section 1: Preparing for Sustainable Agriculture in FFBS** is divided into two subsections. In subsection 1, “**Planning for the FFBS Demonstration Plot,**” it is critical that all six modules are conducted.

SPECIAL NOTE ON **MODULE 4.3 SEASONAL CALENDAR** MINIMUM STANDARDS

1 The facilitator should complete the Seasonal Calendar (Tool 4.3) before the FFBS calendar.




It is critical that the facilitator take time to **learn** about the existing practices and constraints, **reflect** on the information, and then **develop** the strongest and most appropriate **recommendations**.

The facilitator is recommended to **work with local experts** to create a strong technical plan that **adapts approaches found in the FFBS Agriculture Tools to local context**, as well as incorporates additional local specialized practices.

Next, the facilitator should **recommend the experimental practices to participants**.

Once the practices have been agreed upon, be sure to **add the activities to the appropriate timeframe on the Seasonal Calendar**.

2 The facilitator should then complete the FFBS Calendar with participants.



It is important that all activities in the Seasonal Calendar are **incorporated into the FFBS Calendar**.

Having one comprehensive calendar will create clarity, support planning and strong organization.

The seasonal calendar is a graphic planning tool that lists the activities of the production cycle throughout the year, including characteristics, activities, and production needs during each cycle. The seasonal calendar will help identify existing knowledge and practices, help to determine experimental practices to address constraints, and guide activities throughout the agricultural seasons.

The FFBS Calendar incorporates all activities across all modules into one comprehensive calendar to support planning and organization.

Important: Having a separate Seasonal Calendar, updated each growing cycle is very important. It serves as the foundation for an agriculture production plan and an FFBS study plan. It should be updated each growing cycle based on learnings, and the addition of experimental practices. The facilitator should encourage participants to adopt this practice beyond their participation in FFBS.

- In the second sub-section, “**Production Planning for Sustainable Agriculture**,” introduce new modules and concepts over time based on what practices participants are already using. It is recommended to add 1-2 experimental practices per growing cycle.
- **Section 2: Sustainable Crop Management:** It is important to conduct educational sessions from each major topic during pre-sowing to strengthen existing knowledge, and add/tailor new experimental practices, as needed and ~~and~~ desired. This section also can and should ~~also~~ be utilized throughout the growing cycle to support the development of new skills.
- **Section 3: Harvest and Post-Harvest:** At a minimum conduct educational sessions on each topic and continue to add and adapt experimental practices.
- **Section 4: Evaluation, Learning and Celebration:** both modules must be conducted to achieve strong results. “Evaluation of the FFBS Plots” must happen regularly throughout the cycle. Equally important are “Farmer Field Days,” that provide an opportunity to share learnings and highlight successes!
- **Section 5: Reducing Food Loss & Waste:** At a minimum, conduct educational sessions to raise awareness and discuss solutions. Work with participants, when the time is appropriate, to create an approach to reducing food loss and waste through a Circular Food Economy approach.
- **Annex:** This section offers an additional Companion Planting chart as a reference that can be easily adapted for local needs and/or ease of printing.

Secondary actions (nice to have):

Module Delivery: While many of the technical modules could be used as stand-alone tools for increasing knowledge and skills through experimentation at the demonstration sites, **results will be stronger when educational sessions are provided from each section, followed sequentially.** Continuous learning should always be encouraged.

Follow the tools sequentially, and continue to strengthen knowledge and skills from each section:

- **Section 1: Preparing for Sustainable Agriculture in FFBS:** In “Production Planning for Sustainable Agriculture” continue building on existing knowledge and learning desires. This section contains important preventative techniques to build a strong foundation for healthy farms. Become familiar with the benefits and techniques and build in slowly.
- **Section 2: Sustainable Crop Management:** There are many options listed for experimentation. Determine how many experimental practices, along with the farmers, are desired to achieve sustainability. Continue to build practices slowly to build knowledge and resilience.
- **Section 3: Harvest and Post-Harvest:** Continue to build practices slowly to build knowledge and resilience.
- **Explore mechanisms and resources for scaling and sustainability** of contextually appropriate farmer-led learning/action platforms and extension services.

Guiding Principles

CARE's SUPER Principles

- Promote **sustainable** agriculture systems that address climate and environmental impacts, and which are: grounded in healthy ecosystems; driven by stable, accountable and enduring institutions and policies; and based on sustainable social and economic policies and investments that prioritize gender equality in agriculture,
- Promote **productive** (including profitable and nutrition-sensitive) agriculture that specifically addresses the needs of women producers; increases returns on investment, including labor, by farmers; and responds to climate change risks,
- Promote **equitable** outcomes in small-scale agriculture by: supporting the realization of the Right to Food, Water and Nutrition and other rights for the most vulnerable; enabling equal access to opportunities, resources, services and rewards for women farmers as well as men; and promoting access to affordable nutritious food by farm laborers, agricultural value chain workers and rural and urban consumers,
- Build **resilience** for communities and systems to be able to withstand and recover from climate-induced shocks and stresses such as drought or flooding and other risks by: supporting locally-led adaptation in agriculture communities; connecting institutions and collectives for better governance; and using market, technical and climate information to support farmer-led analysis, planning and risk management.

A Do-No-Harm Approach in Agriculture Systems

A do-no-harm approach in agriculture systems should have:

- A deliberate gender focus, incorporating gender transformative approaches found in the FFBS Gender Tools, as well as throughout the FFBS manual.
- Considerations for all elements of sustainability when considering a do-no-harm approach environmental (for example, reducing environmental impacts from industrial techniques that can harm human health and natural resources, such as safe water sources; or being careful not to promote monoculture for its contribution to loss in food crop biodiversity), social (for example, reducing Gender Based Violence that could result from decision-making), economic (for example, the right place, time, and type for purchasing external inputs or consideration of recommendations that require more money, skills and more to maintain), governance (for example, land considerations/where to plant and who has "power" to make changes);
- Considerations for how to reduce conflict between competing agriculture systems/practices. For example, conflicts improving communication between water users (such as water for domestic use, productive use (farmers or cattle ranchers) or industries making large withdrawals) can help reduce conflict. Facilitating communication between water or natural resource committees, livestock groups, farmers groups, local government and businesses can reduce conflict over water and land and increase understanding of needs and locally based solutions.

Integrated, Holistic, and Participatory Approach to Sustainable Agriculture

- Utilize a participatory approach and ensure farmers are in control of experimenting, learning and building confidence and agency to make decisions.
- Utilize best practices from a multitude of sustainable agriculture disciplines and paradigms that can be tailored and adapted for local context.
- Take a holistic (whole) systems approach that considers how each component in a farming system is interconnected and how actions taken in one area can influence another area (“from the individual farm to the local ecosystem, and to communities affected by a farming system both locally and globally²¹”). A systems approach allows for the consideration of consequences, both positive and negative, of “farming practices on both human communities and the environment²².”

Promote New Knowledge and Skills and Honor Existing Knowledge

- Promote new technical information and knowledge, while honoring and building on traditional and existing knowledge and skills to achieve impactful results and greater resilience.

References / Guidance Documents

- [SuPER Principles](#).
- [Adaptation planning with communities: Practitioner Brief](#)
- [Bringing climate change adaptation into farmer field schools](#)
- [Sustainable Agriculture through Sustainable Learning](#)
- [What is Sustainable Agriculture? \(UC Davis\)](#)
- [What is Sustainable Agriculture? \(Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education\)](#)
- [How Can the Farmer Field School Approach be Used to Support Agroecological Transitions in Family Farming in the Global South?](#)
- [References in FFBS Sustainable Agriculture Toolkit](#).

²¹ <https://sustainableagriculture.net/about-us/what-is-sustainable-ag/>

²² <https://sustainableagriculture.net/about-us/what-is-sustainable-ag/>

4. Sustainable Agriculture

Food Loss & Waste



Rationale for Food Loss & Waste in FFBS

Food Loss and Waste (FLW) happens across the entire food value chain and occurs at very high rates. The Food Loss and Waste cross-cutting area impacts every thematic area in FFBS. Reducing FLW is critical to improving the overall wellbeing of farmers, their families, and their communities. FLW is occurring at staggering rates and is impacting food security, climate, market opportunities, natural resources, and more. The module provides practical and simple guidance on how to reduce food loss and waste at every step across the food value chain, from production to post-consumption. The module raises awareness on challenges, provides ideas for solutions, and introduces the concept and importance of taking a Circular Economy Model approach. Additionally, the module describes exactly how a circular economy approach can be designed and applied while using the FFBS toolkit. The module is designed to develop tailored, community-led solutions.

Theoretical Basis

Food Loss refers to food that gets spilled, spoiled or otherwise lost, or incurs reduction of quality and value during its process in the food supply chain before it reaches its final product stage. Another way to think about this in simpler terms is “food loss usually happens at the **production, post-harvest and processing stages** of the food chain.” **Food Waste** refers to food that completes the food supply chain up to a final product, of good quality and is fit for consumption, but still doesn't get consumed because it is discarded, is left to spoil, or expire. Another way to put this is “food waste generally refers to food **lost during marketing & distribution, thrown away by the consumer,**” as well as **what happens post-consumer**, which is a growing area of discussion.

Problem Statement

Tackling FLW is critical to improving overall wellbeing. The current rates are staggering and include²³:

- One third (**1.3 billion tons**) of food produced globally is lost or wasted²⁴.

²³ <https://www.wfpusa.org/articles/8-facts-to-know-about-food-waste-and-hunger/>

²⁴ <https://www.wfp.org/stories/11-facts-about-food-loss-and-waste-and-how-it-links-sustainable-food-systems#:~:text=Around%20one%20third%20of%20food,about%20US%241%20trillion%20annually.&text=3.,to%20bed%20hungry%20each%20night.>

- 44% occurs in low-income countries. In both situations, **small-scale farmers and hungry, undernourished people suffer the most**. The FAO states that if we could reverse this, it would result in “preserving enough food to feed 2 billion people²⁵,” OR twice the number of undernourished people across the globe.
- FAO estimates that **30-40% of total production in low-income countries** can be lost before reaching market.
 - These losses can be as high as 40-50 percent for root crops, fruits and vegetables, 30 percent for cereals and fish, and 20 percent for oilseeds. The loss of marketable food reduces producers’ incomes likely having larger impacts on already disadvantaged people– like women and youth.
- **Resources are lost** when food is lost or wasted (water, soil, seeds, energy, labor...).
 - Around 38% of total energy consumption is utilized to produce food that is either lost or wasted, and...
 - The total volume of water is estimated at 45 trillion gallons of water, equal to 24 percent of all water used for agriculture.
- Food Waste is one of the largest producers of carbon, with an estimated **3.3 billion tons of greenhouse gases** emitted each year.
- Although women play a critical role in the agriculture sector and food value chains, women “face specific constraints in accessing essential productive resources, services and information, and in participating in decision-making,” which impacts women’s ability to “fully contribute to and benefit from” reducing food loss and waste.²⁶

There are clear and direct implications, negative impacts, as well as solutions, linking FLW to important issues across CARE, including Gender Justice, Youth and Livelihoods, Inclusive Markets, Nutrition, Integrated Water Resource Management, WASH, Resilience & Sustainability, Climate Justice, Emergency & Humanitarian issues, and much more.

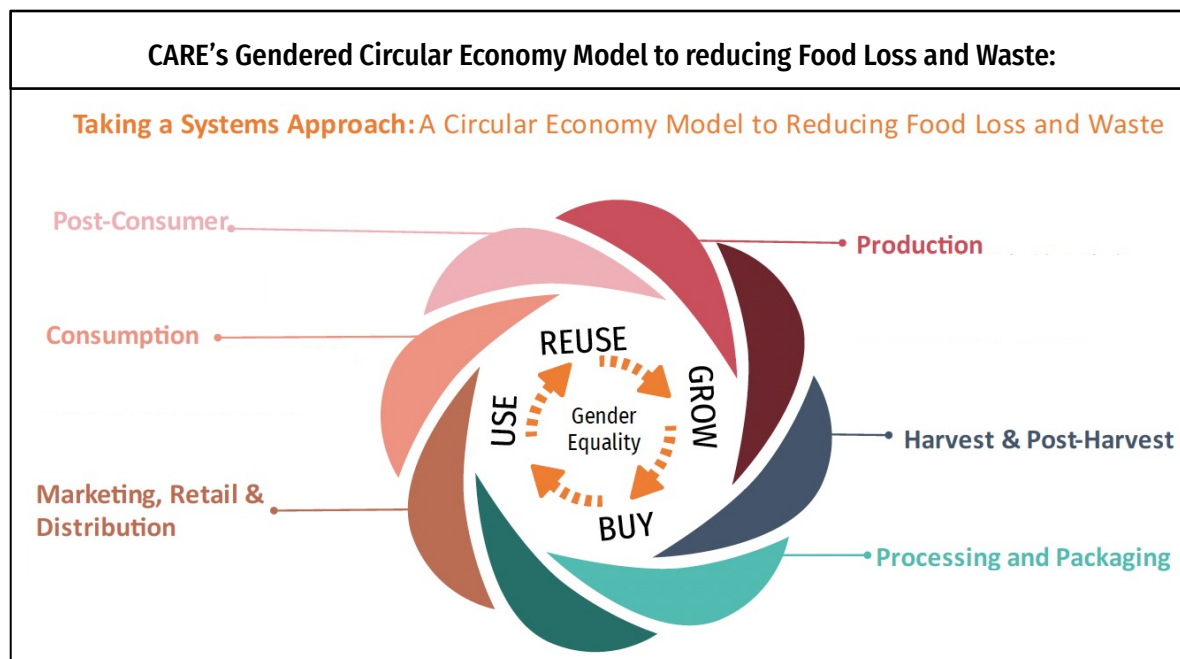
Integrated Solutions

In order to tackle FLW, **a multi-disciplinary approach is needed across the public and private sectors**. Fortunately, the importance of reducing FLW is gaining greater necessary attention. **Food Loss & Waste is a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Goal under Target 12.3** for the United Nations General Assembly. It has been broken down into a **Loss Sub-Indicator** and a **Waste sub-indicator**. Additionally, organizations, governments, the public and private sector have increasingly been supporting efforts and new innovations to reduce global FLW and develop opportunities.

In 2021, CARE’s Global Food Loss and Waste Working Group was formed to consider how to reduce FLW in the communities that CARE serves, including researching models and approaches to reducing FLW.

²⁵ <https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/FAO-UNEP-agriculture-environment-food-loss-waste-day-2022/en>

²⁶ **FAO. 2018. Gender and food loss in sustainable food value chains. A Guiding Note.**



Traditional models for FLW used a Linear Economy model. However, the Working Group found a linear economy follows a “take, make, use, dispose” system²⁷, which generates a high amount of waste as every stage. CARE’s Global Food Loss & Waste Working Group worked to create a CARE’s Gendered Circular Economy Model, that includes the emerging Focus Area of “Post-Consumer” which helps move away from a Linear Approach to a Circular Approach and develops a truly sustainable model. Very importantly, CARE’s Food Loss and Waste module is linked to every thematic area in FFBS, and FFBS focuses on supporting women small-scale producers, empowerment, and gender equality. Therefore, this makes FLW in FFBS gender transformative in nature.

In a Circular Economy Model, “activities at all levels of the food value chain rebuild overall systems health by designing out the concept of waste.” They “maintain raw material sources, reduce environmental impacts of production and consumption, help support economic activities, and products can circulate through systems and society.”

²⁷ <https://www.eitfood.eu/blog/transitioning-to-a-circular-food-economy-the-solution-for-food-waste-and-food-loss#:~:text=A%20linear%20economy%20traditionally%20follows,then%20disposed%20of%20as%20waste.>

Minimum Standards

The essentials (must have)

Build in an educational session for the Food Loss and Waste module into the Seasonal Calendar in the pre-sowing/planning phase. Conduct the module in its entirety. When presenting CARE's Circular Economy Model to Reducing Food Loss and Waste, ensure a **gender-transformative approach** is taken:

- First, identify where food loss and waste occur at each stage and ask who is impacted.
- Next, ask why those identified are most impacted. Work to understand what the constraints are.
- Finally, identify potential solutions for each stage. Be sure to use the FFBS gender tools, as well as other tools in FFBS when identifying solutions. This will support a gender transformative approach.

Secondary actions (nice to have):

- **Option 1:** Choose at least two phases to test a Circular Food Economy model to design local solutions and create business opportunities:
 - Consider the value chain that the community is working with in the FFBS toolkit.
 - List **what** local challenges for that phase. Where do you find food loss and waste at each stage?
 - List **who** is impacted by the loss and waste.
 - List **why** that group is impacted. What are the constraints?
 - List activities that will already be taking place during the FFBS training in that phase that support local solutions.
 - Discuss and list what types of business opportunities that solution could provide for the next phase of the model (for example, if food is wasted at the consumption level, could it be used to create compost to sell?)
 - Create an Action Plan; determine who should be involved at each phase, hold discussions on roles and support needs, and create agreements on next steps to test the approach.
 - Build necessary steps into the Seasonal Calendar
 - **Collaborate** with sustainable food systems specialists, local agriculture extension, crop experts on specific value chains, research institutions, universities, and the public and private sectors to develop integrated plans and solutions. Collaborate with existing entrepreneurs to determine new business partnerships.
- **Option 2:** Design a full Circular Food Economy model project to test solutions and business opportunities at every stage.

Guiding Principles

- Circular Economy Model / Circular Food Economy Model

References / Guidance Documents

- [Eight Facts to Know about Food Waste and Hunger](#)
- [Food and the circular economy: Deep Dive](#)
- [Transitioning to a Circular Food Economy: the Solution for Food Waste and Food Loss](#)

5. Livestock



Rationale for Livestock in FFBS

Livestock plays a key role in the global food systems, supporting food, nutrition, and income security of nearly 1.3 billion people and contributing 40% of the global GDP of agriculture²⁸, and a source of inputs for crop production (manure and animal traction²⁹. Animal source foods obtained from livestock products such as milk and eggs contain multiple nutrients³⁰ particularly for PLWs and children. Livestock is also an important asset and livelihood source³¹ ³². It can provide a significant and sustainable pathway out of poverty and contribute to risk and vulnerability management, particularly for people living in low and middle-income countries. However, resource poor livestock keepers are consistently constrained by low production, climate change, and limited access to livestock markets, veterinary, and extension services.

Theoretical Basis

600 million resource poor livestock keepers are women³³ who play a key role in the day-to-day livestock production and management. Despite their role, women face unequal access to inputs (such as vaccines, vet drugs, feeds); the right breeds that suit their environment, markets, information; extension and vet services due to the biased gender roles and the limiting social cultural norms and practices³⁴. Most agro-input dealers, veterinary service providers and livestock markets serving rural areas are in market centers away from the villages where livestock keepers live. Women have mobility challenges due to their other responsibilities at home and social cultural norms and traditions that limit their freedom to leave their homes to participate in trainings, purchase inputs and access markets. They also have low literacy rates and limited marketing skills, face constraints when they want to access credit from formal financial

²⁸ <https://www.fao.org/animal-production/en#:~:text=Livestock%20contributes%20to%20nearly%2040,least%201.3%20billion%20people%20worldwide.>

²⁹ <https://www.fao.org/3/i0680e/i0680e03.pdf>

³⁰ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0379572116647823#:~:text=Animal%20source%20foods%20are%20not,foods%20of%20plant%20origin%20alone.>

³¹ <https://www.fao.org/pastoralist-knowledge-hub/news/detail/en/c/1330121/>

³² <https://www.fao.org/animal-production/en/>

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/moving-towards-sustainability-the-livestock-sector-and-the-world-bank>

³⁴ <https://www.fao.org/3/i3216e/i3216e.pdf>

institutions due to traditions which require men's signatures, and lack of collateral and lack of land property ownership. Women also have low decision-making power around consumption and sale of livestock products as well as use of income from the sale^{35,36}.

Our work in CARE places gender justice at the center. This FFBS livestock toolkit is aligned to CARE's Gender Equality Framework to ensure that women and their households are able to improve their livestock productivity, through the adoption of sustainable, climate smart and labor-saving livestock husbandry practices and technologies, equitable and inclusive access to productive assets and inputs, as well as adding value to livestock products and access to high value output markets. The livestock tools contain practical activities that are designed to assist livestock farmers identify their production problems, test and adopt innovative and productivity enhancing solutions, while building on their traditional and existing knowledge and skills. The tools are also designed to be adapted to address gender-based inequities in livestock production in the way practices are introduced or discussed, shared, promoted, and adopted while also increasing nutritional knowledge and market access. Additionally, the tools can be scaled for various livestock production systems and contexts. They are divided into 5 major sections.

Section one contains a set of 4 preparatory tools (4.1- 4.5) which provide practical guidance and steps to assist livestock farmers and FFBS facilitator to plan and establish the FFBS. Activities in this section include identification and prioritization of the livestock keeper's production problems; selection of a model farm for the FFBS; how to develop comparative experiments and a seasonal calendar of livestock activities. All these are aimed at helping the facilitator and FFBS participants to determine the set of activities and skills they wish to learn through the FFBS, which will then be used to develop an activity implementation plan for the FFBS.

Section two contains a set of six husbandry tools with practical activities that are designed to assist livestock farmers to, test and adopt innovative and productivity enhancing solutions, while building on their traditional and existing knowledge and skills. These activities must be carried out at each stage of the development/production of any livestock species. They include housing; breeding, rearing newborns, feeds and feeding strategies; Feed conservation and formulation; and disease control and farm biosecurity. The tools are more general and should be adopted further, as the need arises to suit the type of livestock enterprise and local context before training begins. Additional technical reference materials have been added to help with the adoption. In addition, facilitators must remember to incorporate relevant strategies and group action plans to strengthen last mile input and service delivery systems for improved breeds, feeds/fodder, vaccines, vet services, and water for livestock) while using the husbandry tools for training. These are critical for the success of any livestock interventions and ensure animals are well nourished, healthy and productive. These could be strengthened through partnerships/linkages with

³⁵ <https://www.fao.org/3/i2050e/i2050e03.pdf>

agro-input dealers, market actors, collective input purchase and marketing, community animal health workers, VSLAs, etc.

Section three contains tools for post-harvest loss reduction for livestock products and introduces the basic concepts of food safety. It contains practical technical information and activities for identifying food safety risks at production, livestock product handling and marketing and possible risk and post-harvest loss mitigation options available for the livestock producers including information on Aflatoxin in animal feeds and antimicrobial resistance.

Section four contains four brief technical topics on emerging livestock issues that are of global importance to enhance livestock keepers' knowledge and awareness and enable them to take necessary measures to mitigate any risks. Farmers aware. These are: Animal Manure management; Management of browse/grazeland; Use and protection of water sources for livestock and Agriculture risk management – Livestock Insurance. These topics should be incorporated into the training calendar at any point during the training, depending on the context, farmer needs and project objectives. Where possible, subject matter specialists for these topics should be invited to FFBS sessions to facilitate discussions on these topics including action planning.

Section five has two modules for evaluating the model livestock farm and performance of the FFBS at individual and group levels. Monitoring and evaluation must be conducted to achieve strong results. "Evaluation of the livestock farm performance and farmer adoption of improved management practices must happen regularly throughout the cycle. Equally important is "Farmer Field Days," that provide an opportunity to share learnings and highlight successes!

Finally, this section offers additional technical resources that may be useful for training.

Minimum Standards

The essentials (must have):

During design of livestock FFBS program, be sure to include:

- Appropriate staffing with relevant technical expertise to oversee implementation of livestock FFBS activities
- Sufficient budget for programming
- Promotion of appropriate livestock species adopted to the local context, that are pro-women, suitable for the program objectives and that have potential to improve incomes and nutrition of the participants. Livestock species selection should be informed by a rapid context and market analysis
- Activities and strategies to strengthen output markets and last mile input and service delivery systems for vaccines, feeds/fodder, water for livestock, vet services, training and extension and improved breeds). These are critical for the success of any livestock interventions and ensure animals are well nourished, healthy and productive. These could be strengthened through partnerships/linkages with agro-input dealers, market actors, supporting establishment of

women/youth run SMEs for hatcheries, breeding services, feed milling, collective input purchase and marketing, community animal health workers, VSLAs, etc.

During Implementation of Livestock FFBS activities:

- Toolkit should be adopted to the local context, livestock species/enterprise and technical guidelines for the country of implementation. Ensure Facilitation, Collectives, Marketing, Gender, Nutrition, Community Score Card, Advocacy, WASH Education and PMT modules are included in the adopted toolkit.
- Begin FFBS with development of a seasonal activity calendar for the selected livestock species/enterprise to guide the facilitator through the season's activities.
- Facilitator should become familiar with the livestock tools prior to leading livestock FFBS sessions, make all the necessary arrangements with participants to prepare and avail all the necessary facilitation tools and materials required to facilitate each session.
- Consider participants availability, the agricultural seasonal calendar, women's workload, and other events in the community when developing the seasonal activity calendar for livestock.
- Conduct FFBS activities in a model/demo farm, ranch, or pastureland that is central and accessible to all.
- Promote best animal husbandry and marketing practices and innovations that are sustainable, productivity enhancing, climate smart and resilient and that are in line with the animal welfare principles and promote food safety and protect human health.
- Learning sessions should also include comparative experiments to help farmers test, validate and adopt new, simple, and affordable practices and innovations that have been proven to solve local problems, improve production and food safety. Such as; the use of feeds supplements vs normal feeding practices, improved fodder varieties vs normal fodder, improved breeds vs local breeds, vaccination, dipping/spraying and those that reduce workload of women in livestock activities.
- Regardless of the point at which the FFBS participants decide to start their livestock production activities, FFBS activity cycle should end after collective marketing of livestock products and participatory monitoring and learning conducted.
- It is important to collaborate with the government livestock office in the planning, and training to ensure alignment with government priorities and plans, to avoid sharing conflicting and confusing information and approaches to the livestock keepers.
- Livestock training is technical and FFBS program should develop a plan for hand holding, mentoring, and monitoring quality of training provided to farmers by the FFBS facilitators/lead farmers. Government officers can support with this. Conduct a participatory performance tracking (PPT) session at the end of the FFBS learning cycle to help participants evaluate their performance.
- Incorporate plans to enhance farmers' access to animal health service and other input services and supplies to ensure success of the FFBS. These could be through partnerships and or linkages with government and private service providers.

Secondary actions (nice to have):

- Where possible, include any other relevant/special topics based on the context such as: animal manure management, peace building, natural resource management, drivers of climate variability, or environmental degradation, how it affects production and the need to adapt to these etc.,
- Where possible prioritize targeting care groups, pregnant and lactating women (PLWs) with livestock FFBS activities and integrate nutrition and hygiene education to improve nutrition outcomes.
- Where possible, livestock pass-on schemes/projects should make provisions for not only primary beneficiaries but also secondary and tertiary livestock beneficiaries to receive FFBS training, and have access to inputs, Vet services and markets to ensure success of the pass-on and sustainability.

Guiding Principles

As CARE, we want to promote consumption of safe, animal source foods through the livestock FFBS training and related activities, along with fruit/vegetable diversity. Cereal-based diets are often the only option for the very poor, which impacts PLWs and young kids the most.

We endeavor to Do-No-Harm while shifting power dynamics in livestock production with our gender transformative approaches by promoting livestock species that will not add to the burden of women, such as small ruminants and gender dialogues to challenge limiting social norms.

We also support women's agency and empowerment in livestock by strengthening livestock vaccines and other input and service delivery systems.

We promote livestock husbandry practices and technologies that are Sustainable, Productive (profitable and nutrition-sensitive), Equitable, and Resilient, climate smart, simple, affordable; labor saving and those that do not cause harm to the environment or human health e.g., through water and land pollution with animal waste; and practices that are aligned with the animal welfare principles of disease prevention and veterinary treatment, appropriate housing, management, proper nutrition, humane handling, and humane slaughter.

We also do not promote irresponsible use of antibiotics, putting more emphasis on disease prevention and general farm biosecurity practices in addition to linking livestock keepers to well-trained CAHW and Vet service providers.

References / Guidance Documents

- [Introduction to the Recommendations for Animal Welfare](#)
- [Understanding and Integrating Gender issues into Livestock Projects and Programming](#)

- [FAO FFS for Poultry Producers](#)
- [Keeping Village Poultry: A Technical Manual for Small-Scale Poultry Production](#)
- [Indigenous Chicken Farming Training Manual](#)
- [Family Poultry Training Course](#)
- [Training Notes for Community Animal Health Workers in Malawi.](#)
- [Sheep Fattening Manual for Livestock Farmers and Extension Workers in Ethiopia](#)
- [Sheep Farmer Field School](#)
- [Farmer Field School for Small-scale livestock producers](#)
- [Farmer Field Schools- Key practices for DRR implementers](#)
- [Dairy Cattle Feeding and Nutrition management](#)
- [Farmer Dairy Goat Production Handbook](#)
- [Rearing Dairy Goats](#)
- [Goat Keeping- Useful Management Practices for Smallholders.](#)
- [Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis Handbook](#)
- [Fodder Production Manual for Extension Staff](#)
- [Farmer Training Manual on Improved Fodder Production and Conservation Practices](#)
- [Climate Smart Agricultural Technologies, Innovations and Management Practices for Pasture and Fodder Value Chains](#)
- [Agroforestry Training Manual for Extension Staff and Lead Farmers](#)
- [Agroforestry Guide for Field Practitioners](#)
- [Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards](#)
- [USAID Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance Emergency Application Guidelines](#)
- [Heifer International Animal Well-being standards.](#)

6. Marketing



Rationale for Marketing in FFBS

The marketing tools are one of the key pillars of the Farmer Field and Business School (FFBS) model. These tools provide a sequence of steps that farmer groups need to pass through, starting with opportunity identification/market research, all the way to certification of their products. The marketing tools focus on market-driven production and the engagement of private sector. They emphasize that agricultural entrepreneurship is a necessary skill set to catalyze productivity, thereby enabling profitability and competitiveness of the farm enterprises, making farmers ready for higher value opportunities including through certification and formalization of their enterprises (individual/collective). The toolkit is also concerned with resolving the constraints that are creating dysfunctions within the specific value chain and the larger agricultural market system. It looks at both input and output markets, in relation to the farmer groups. For input markets it is concerned with access to quality affordable inputs and to finance and production resources to enable effective market participation. For output markets, FFBS offers the opportunity to improve farm competitiveness, by starting with the markets to identify demand and align production in close engagements with the private sector. Through this engagement process, it also promotes dignified employment within commercial agriculture's supply chain practices. Agricultural market systems are by far the most important for women, as they represent much of the labor in agricultural value chains.

Theoretical Basis

Market systems development approaches address the root causes of why markets often fail to meet the needs of the poor. Aligned to CARE's gender equality framework, our agriculture, and markets development approach, integrates areas of inquiry that analyzes women's participation at different functions within the value chain and identifies entry points and nodes³⁷ of opportunity with meaningful gains from their participation. MSD focuses on interventions that modify the incentives and behavior of market actors – public, private, formal and informal – to view the poor as integral stakeholders along with customers. This might translate into the creation of an array of opportunities for capturing that market through last-mile service delivery and embedding of services for technology adoption and/or enabling

³⁷ <https://coady.stfx.ca/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/Typology-market-based-approaches.pdf>

improved use of inputs that would in turn strengthen the value chain.³⁸ In output markets – buyers are engaged to improve their sourcing, including through examining gender relations across their supply chain to enable transformation and inclusiveness.³⁹ The agricultural market systems behavior change wheel of USAID elaborates the change pathways that agricultural market systems take towards inclusiveness as change occurs within the core functions of demand and supply. It exhibits the patterns of behavior that drive the market system, and the reinforcing and counterbalancing forces that support the change process. The behavior change is further categorized by the level of change that occurs from early-stage change to mid-transition stages, to the tipping point for the market system to becoming a well-functioning, inclusive system. Our programs should connect the macro with the micro and meso levels to unleash opportunities that sustain beyond the project period.

Minimum Standards

For Market Facilitators: Understanding of basics of value chain development/ market systems development with emphasis on value chain analysis, value chain programming design, and marketing. It is important that the market facilitator understands and can emphasize the market based and entrepreneurial approach to agricultural activities for the farmers.

For the Training of Farmer Groups: This is for most farmer groups, the first opportunity of introduction to marketing as a group. The facilitator should introduce the concepts and help farmers understand, to successfully adopt a market focus, the group has to change its approach towards production and shift their practices. This session's focus is to introduce marketing to the groups and gauge their interest and seriousness in adopting an alternate mentality and attitude regarding their production. In this first session, the farmer group and all its members should have a clear understanding and orientation to marketing, a group agreement to produce with the market in mind, and mindfulness of the change in production practices if they adopt a market orientation. This process should ensure that the group is committed and ready to change/ improve their production practices and adopt a market orientation. The facilitator will also take the farmer group through what it means to be an entrepreneur, why it is important and how the group will work towards building an enterprise that generates revenue and is profitable for them.

The essentials (must have):

- **Undertaking gendered value chain assessments** to map out the role of women across the value chain (examining the full range of activities and services required to bring a product or service from its conception to end use) and determine where most value is and how to effectively ensure women benefit.

³⁸ <https://www.finnfund.fi/en/investing/investments/case-ethiochicken/>

³⁹ <https://businessfightspoverty.org/articles/gender-equality-is-everyones-business-engaging-men-as-allies-to-advance-gender-equality-across-the-value-chain/>

- **Seasonal/Production Calendar** as the basis for planning selected crop activities, including planning time to engage with the smallholder farmers.
- **Introduction to entrepreneurship** includes understanding and learning how to catalyze the enterprise spirit. Understanding what it will take for the group to be enterprising, prioritizing and understanding what needs to be done by the individuals and the group to increase the Entrepreneurial capacity.
- **Establishing a marketing committee:** Selecting and supporting the formation of marketing committees in the groups for undertaking input and output marketing. Enable groups collective marketing, support business growth for collectives and access to market information.
- **Participatory market research and market opportunity identification** to help groups identify the best opportunities to engage with, undertaking market visits with farmers (their marketing committees) at the pre-sowing stage and vegetative stages.
- **Use standard selection criteria** as defined in the FFBS modules – covering economic, social (gender/youth), environmental, nutritional, and institutional considerations.
- **Profitability analysis/ simple gross margin analysis** to ensure farmers know and understand what the most profitable value chains are and how to price their commodities. Production estimation to know the capabilities and capacities of producer groups and associations.
- **Market linkages and engaging private sector:** Mapping out private sectors and leading firms operating in the value chains early and develop engagement plans that articulate the value proposition for the private sector. These may include efficiencies in the value chain, return on investment because of strengthened or improved linkages with producer groups.
- **Designing business plans** for producer marketing groups including transitioning to formal enterprise forming/joining an enterprise, cooperative, or association depending on the vision of the group.
- **Access to agricultural inputs:** Design, develop and support access to input market systems that ensure sustained commercially viable last-mile service delivery.

Secondary actions (nice to have):

- **Smart Subsidies:** In any development program, even one with a market focus, there will be a place and need for programs to subsidize certain costs mainly to introduce a new product and promote uptake. CARE's agriculture and market systems work is guided by the fact that where subsidies are provided, they are targeted, practical, share only a portion of the cost, and as much as possible do not eliminate the role of the private sector.
- **Enable Innovation** to achieve poverty reduction, transformative change in the target population, new ways of thinking are required, and programs should promote innovative solutions to tackle these.

Guiding Principles

A do-no-harm approach in market systems should have **deliberate gender focus, be end-market/driven** and **adopt a facilitation approach**. Further described below these guiding principles hinge on enabling

sustainable economic development. Additional principles sourced from pro-poor value chain development, markets for the poor approaches and participatory market systems development are discussed below.

- **Gender focus** CARE's focus on the root causes of poverty/vulnerability, identifies unequal gender relations as one of the underlying root causes, which contributes to low productivity, low competitiveness of outputs and low performance of local economies.
- **Facilitate** but do not distort the system. Our role as a development actor is to facilitate market linkages to enable sustainability and scale – and not to replace market actors, it is particularly important that CARE is not providing the markets and services directly.
- **Our targets** as an approach for poverty alleviation market systems development programs, strives to increase incomes for the poorest of the economically active, i.e., those involved in some form of business activity, trade or producing – are more often regarded as the able poor.
- **Systems level focus:** a system view provides the ability to observe events and patterns in a new way and respond to them differently. To achieve the desired scale, value chain development initiatives need to focus their work beyond targeted businesses, beyond a few buyers, and beyond a handful of service providers. Initiatives should strengthen the whole market system or industry, working within and considering the wider context. This includes value chain businesses, commercial support markets, institutions, the business environment, and where possible, the social, political, cultural, and environmental context.
- **Client centered, tailored, demand-driven design:** there is no one size that fits all market solutions, rather each context needs its own analysis to shape through to design based on the circumstances of the market and our impact group. Value chain programs are highly customized to the target clients, their context, and an identified market opportunity. Solutions need to reflect the practical reality of the market so that critical problems in the value chain can be addressed in a meaningful way. They need to address the range of specific challenges faced by diverse targets.
- **Sustainability:** Improvements in the value chain should be offered by commercial businesses on a profitable basis to build a dynamic, efficient value chain that endures once the program is finished. Applying a simple framework of analysis for sustainability will serve as a guide in making decisions.

References / Guidance Documents

- [Agriculture and Market Systems Tools and Approaches](#)
- [Procedure for conducting market survey 2020.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [Conducting a Market Research Survey](#)
- [Adding Value to Value Chains](#)
- [Program Design for Value Chain Initiatives](#)
- [The Operational Guide for the Making Markets Work for the Poor \(M4P\) Approach](#)
- [How to Do Commodity Value Chain Development Projects](#)

- [Typology Market-Based Approaches](#)
- [A Framework for Inclusive Market System Development](#)
- [Gender Equality is Everyone's Business: How Can Companies Engage Men as Allies Across the Value Chain?](#)
- [The Operational Guide for the Making Market Work for the Poor \(M4P\) Approach](#)
- [Promoting Gender Equitable Opportunities in Agricultural Value Chains](#)
- [The Operational Guide for the Making Markets Work for the Poor \(M4P\) Approach: Diagnosis](#)
- [Women's Economic Empowerment: Pushing the Frontiers of Inclusive Market Development](#)
- [Four Core Principles of Participatory Market Systems Development](#)
- [Approach to Inclusive Market Systems](#)
- [A Framework for Strengthening Gender Integration in Market Systems Development](#)
- [Gender and Market Development](#)
- [Inclusive Market System Development](#)

6. Marketing

Agricultural Finance



Rationale for Agricultural Finance in FFBS

Access to finance remains a crucial input factor and a catalyst within value chains in enhancing productivity and competitiveness of farm, agro-processing/value addition, and related enterprises. It is estimated that the demand for food will increase by 70% by 2050, and at least \$80 billion annual investments will be needed to meet this demand.

CARE's target clients participating in agricultural value chain activities have differing levels of financial service needs. To determine the financing needs of CARE's target clients we have categorized their enterprise characteristics into these broad groupings as subsisting, commercializing, and transitioning/ed to medium/large farm enterprise.

- The subsisting category contains women farmers and microentrepreneurs, including the traditionally unbanked, operate a low in-put, low-cost, therefore low output, low productivity, and low profitability⁴⁰ – contributing to low performance of the value chain.⁴¹ The subsisting smallholder farmer has little or no surplus but can improve farming practices and build assets to strengthen resilience to external shocks.
- Commercial farmers, group of farmers, processor/microentrepreneur that are striving for opportunities and farming as a business having passed through the FFBS curricula. They are generating surplus and increasing their productivity through use of improved inputs, adoption of improved farm management practices, and having regular sales to buyers and traders.⁴² This group of farmers may operate as either a formal/early informal unit/cluster/association whereby they aggregate their demand for inputs, (may) consolidate their plots to achieve efficiencies, aggregate their produce for sales, and have established relationship with buyer(s).
- Transitioning/transitioned to medium/large enterprise, are a group of farmers, a farmer or agri-preneur that has consolidated its activities into a formal enterprise, fully integrated into the value chain and relies primarily on hired labor and mechanization.

⁴⁰ In CARE Malawi we found that simple paper” Certificates” for women who had been trained by CARE in agro-dealer/business techniques had more access to business loans or credit from wholesalers

⁴¹ https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadu684.pdf

⁴² https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/OPA00W6FC.pdf

Theoretical Basis

*“Value chain finance” refers to the flows of funds to and among the various links within a value chain. It relates to any or all of the financial services, products and support services flowing to and/or through a value chain to address the needs and constraints of those involved in that chain, be it to obtain financing, or to secure sales, procure products, reduce risk and/or improve efficiency within the chain.*⁴³

Understanding the financial service context, i.e., the overall ecosystem, the demand side and supply side is a necessary first step for programs⁴⁴ to enable them to develop appropriate solutions. Value chain finance is concerned with increasing the growth or competitiveness of the chain and leveraging relations between actors to lower or mitigate risk. Value chain financing is a term used to depict both: 1) internal/direct financing between value chain actors as between a seed supplier/agro-dealer and sales agent or a farmer/ farmer cooperative and 2) external/indirect financing to the value chain through intermediary financial service providers (banks, lease companies, MFIs, others).⁴⁵

CARE’s approach in value chain financing involves incentivizing these direct and indirect actors to mobilize increased financing for small scale producers and micro and small enterprises. CARE’s set of push activities at the subsisting levels improve the bankability of the target small scale producers and enterprises (for example, through VSLAs). These in turn create a pool of commercializing enterprises, that attracts/creates the business case private sector (buyers/suppliers) and finance providers, pulling their investment on the value chain.

A range of financing solutions are introduced to achieve improvements in value chain performance targeting producers and enterprises. These are broadly categorized to fit 1) investment capital covering start-up and/or expansion 2) working capital and 3) risk management. CARE market systems development programs often integrate in their design value chain financing instruments commonly referred to as innovation fund. The innovation fund acts as a pool resource to address these three main categories of agricultural financing needs of small-scale producers and enterprises. Just as the name refers, the innovation fund, is used to finance efficiency enhancing approaches, technologies, and tools, for pilot testing and promotion. This pool of funds commonly serves as a matching business grant to co-finance solutions with enterprises and/or as a risk sharing facility.

To assure sustainability, CARE programs should work with Financial Service Providers to create flexible loan products that cater to specific small-scale producers and enterprise needs along the above-mentioned categories. The engagement with FSPs would also cover:

⁴³<https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/39144386/Agricultural+value+chain+finance+strategy+and+design.pdf/1ae68ed6-4c3c-44f4-8958-436e469553bb>

⁴⁴ <https://data2x.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/WFID-A-Data-Driven-Path-to-Womens-Financial-Inclusion.pdf>

⁴⁵ https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnadu684.pdf

- The physical **accessibility of FSP services**, its distribution outlets including network branches, partners, agent models, and service penetration within the target areas to bring services close to often rural target clients.
- The development of **tailored products** that the FSP could make loans available. Where possible, product development is undertaken together with a main buyer/processor and/or input supplier. The engagement of the buyer/input supplier would create a degree of assurance for the FSP on marketability and/or reduce the risk of investment associated with the quality of the product/input. It also assures the private sector of a sustained market and uptake of their products/services as input suppliers and assures consistent quality and timely supply of produce on the side of the processor/buyer. This is a hybrid approach that brings both indirect and direct value chain financing actors to jointly work on upgrading the value chain.
- Integrated action to address provider level biases, as gender roles often impact the supply side of agri-business. This would require developing sectoral GED/PSHEA orientation/training to tackle normative perceptions that are acting as barriers for women producers and entrepreneurs. It would also entail developing their products and services to ensure inclusivity.

Facilitating supplier and trader credits for farmers or value addition enterprises is a form of direct value chain financing, and is usually linked through the aggregation hub of the association/cooperative. It also is a common feature of contract farming. This form of direct value chain financing is common and may not require any monetary incentives towards the market actor, particularly, if the business case or profitability would out-weight the cost the market actor would incur. If, however, the upfront costs of expansion are a significant challenge for the private sector then the innovation fund may be activated to match the costs of their business plans as processors, last-mile input suppliers, and the like. CARE programs should also work with FSPs to enable financing for these private sector actors rather than matching private actors directly. The loan guarantee fund (LGF) is a value chain financing instrument that may need to be instituted depending on contextual relevance. The LGF is attached to a loan product and is a risk sharing facility that would be activated only in the case of default on a loan product.

In agriculture market system risks are inherent and the poor shoulder the biggest risks in market systems and value chains. If crops fail, prices drop, or there is an illness in the household, they may have nothing to fall back on. These disproportionate risks, and their inability to mitigate them, prevent poor people from effectively participating in markets.⁴⁶ This also weakens and destabilizes value chains for actors who process, distribute, and retail the products. Creative solutions that work with all stakeholders in the value chain are needed to alleviate the burden of risk from the poor. Investing in a **risk-management ecosystem** will benefit people at the bottom of the pyramid while building a more resilient and reliable value chain.

A key step in this risk-management ecosystem is to assess the expected impact of each risk, and the level of potential threat it poses to the value chain. Then, plotting out the mitigation measure to reduce the

⁴⁶ <https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Adding-value-to-value-chains.pdf>

influence of the risk, linking it to specific interventions or activities proposed in the project. This would extend, as far as the extent to which meteorological data and early warning information should be integrated and/or is accessible. It also means that the project needs to establish links with FSPs for risk insurance. Access to risk insurance products from FSPs, where available would look at establishing links with insurance providers, promoting of their products by supporting opportunities for awareness raising to target small scale producers and enterprises. Where unavailable, CARE programs often focus on input risk sharing such as sharing the risk on a loan product with the FSP or using input financing smart-subsidies for reducing the risk to first time users.

Minimum Standards

The essentials (must have):

- **Financial service needs analysis** is needed to understand the key unmet needs for CARE program participants. Identify key obstacles to accessing agricultural finance, especially for women.
- **Conduct market research**, including context analysis and mapping of financial service providers & their products (this includes both formal and informal FSPs).
- **Identify a set of financial products and services** that would be suitable based on the needs assessment and market research.
- For each proposed financial solution, run a unit-economic analysis to determine the cost of capital for CARE's program participants.
- Map potential ag-finance risks and mitigation strategies e.g., climate risk, production risk, investment risk, market risk, etc.
- Mapping of lead firms and their terms and conditions for sourcing contracts that they would offer to producer groups and/or the supply terms for inputs including consignment contracting options for last-mile agro-dealers, agents, and cooperatives.
- Contextualized innovation fund standard operation procedures/ operation strategy

Secondary actions (nice to have):

- Before introducing any new solutions, run agile tests with program participants using low fidelity prototypes to get their feedback.

Guiding Principles

- Commitment to addressing supply, demand, and ecosystem challenges to unlock sustainable access to finance.
- Avoiding indebtedness of program participants
- Addressing systemic and social barriers that limit women's access to finance.
- Partnering with other service providers to bridge finance gaps.
- Non-monetary incentives work too! Particularly with private sector engagement and finance providers, the business case should be the first compelling point of partnership rather than a

direct subsidy or incentive of programs. Program teams ought to determine early on not to distort the market but work through the market.

- Validate, be ready to assess and re-assess solutions across the continuum to keep program abreast of changes in the ecosystem, or target clients changing needs and contexts.

References / Guidance Documents

- [Value Chain Finance](#)
- [Pathways to Prosperity](#)
- [A Data-Driven Path to Women's Financial Inclusion](#)
- [Financial Solutions for Women in Rural and Agricultural Livelihoods](#)
- [Mobile Technologies and Digitized Data to Promote Access to Finance for Women in Agriculture](#)
- [Digital Financial Tools for Women Smallholder Farmers](#)
- [FAO Policy on Gender Equality](#)
- [CARE VSLA Scaling Strategy Overview](#)
- [Value Chain Finance: Primer, Diagnostic Checklist, and Model Scope of Work](#)
- [Rethinking our Understandings of Agri-SME's](#)
- [Adding Value to Value Chains](#)
- [Agriculture Finance and Agriculture Insurance](#)

6. Marketing

Food Safety



Rationale for Food Safety in FFBS

FFBS is a collective approach that integrates extension, technical assistance, and training. Female producers are at the center of this collective effort to improve agricultural and livestock production for their business competitiveness through equity access to inputs, knowledge, innovation, services, and markets. Producing quality, nutritious, healthy, and safe food for families, communities, and domestic and international markets is an FFBS priority. Food safety, protecting consumers from foodborne illnesses, is an emphasis of FFBS marketing programming. This allows producers and processors to differentiate their product as safe to consume and, thus, potentially sell it for more in the marketplace.

There are many hazards in farm environments, packing facilities, food transportation, storage, and distribution of food. The most common hazards associated with them are chemical (pesticides, cleaning products, etc.), physical (glasses, stones, wood chips, etc.), or biological (bacteria, viruses, and parasites). Microbial contamination of fresh produce (fruit and vegetables) is a concern only when these products are consumed raw.

Microbial contamination risks on-farm can come from humans/ workers (hands, clothing, and shoes), food contact surfaces (sorting tables, harvest containers, transport vehicles, etc.), water (for production, harvest and postharvest), soil amendments (when including manure, animal mortalities, and blood), and animals (wildlife, pets, working animal, and livestock)⁴⁷. Once fruits and vegetables are contaminated, it is difficult to eliminate contamination. Hence, producers must be proactive to prevent contamination. Women play a key role in securing food safety in households, communities, and domestic and international markets. Our society does not recognize this hidden role generally done by women, across different value chains. According to WHO, food safety, nutrition, and food security are embedded to ensure a healthy society with sustainable development.

Lastly, the relationship between humans, animals, and ecosystems can determine mutual health. This interconnected relationship is known as “One Health”. To ensure that, it requires integrated actions of multiple sectors such as health, education, and agriculture to create surveillance and effective disease control methods. Some diseases might be transmitted to humans through contaminated food or by

⁴⁷ <https://cals.cornell.edu/produce-safety-alliance/psa-curriculum/grower-manual-v12-pdf-files-commercial-print>

interactions with animals and or ecosystems. Food safety is vital to produce quality food, protecting human health, and maintaining healthy human nutrition⁴⁸.

Theoretical Basis

The women's role in feeding the world is invisible across value chain links of most agricultural and livestock value chains. However, women are responsible for planting, crop management, raising animals and processing livestock products, handling products in food facilities, transporting and distributing food, and cooking at home or in restaurants. In the food industry, there is evidence that women play a critical role in ensuring food safety and make more conscious decisions considering food safety whether when purchasing food for family⁴⁹ or as workers, managers or owners in the food business environment.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates⁵⁰ that annually 600 million people fall ill and 420,000 people die after eating contaminated food. Most of these fatalities happen within the middle- and low-income countries. However, in the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates⁵¹ that 48 million people become sick from foodborne illnesses, 128,000 hospitalizations, and about 3,000 people die annually from such illnesses.

Female producers are essential to achieving public health goals by addressing foodborne illness through preventative approaches when cultivating, harvesting, and handling produce. In contrast, women receive less wage than men for these and other agricultural and livestock activities.⁵² Moreover, across the value chains, women farmers, women ranchers, and women workers suffer unfairness, discrimination, and a hostile working environment. FFBS considers all these situations and discusses concepts and practices to ensure food safety and gender equity. The CARE cross-cutting approach⁵³ to food safety includes considerations for nutrition, access to markets, justice, safety, and traceability, which means producers and consumers have access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate food for all, at the same time advocating for empowerment by transforming inequitable gender norms⁵⁴, well-being, and safety of women producers in the food system.

⁴⁸ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/one-health>

⁴⁹ <https://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/issues/311/ge-foods/blog/4278/17-reasons-to-celebrate-women-in-agriculture>

⁵⁰ https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/199350/9789241565165_eng.pdf?sequence=1

⁵¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/foodborneburden/estimates-overview.html>

⁵² <https://www.fao.org/3/i2050e/i2050e.pdf>

⁵³ **Agriculture and Market Systems Tools and Approaches Paper (work in progress)**

⁵⁴ <https://www.care.org/our-work/health/strengthening-healthcare/social-analysis-and-action-saa/#:~:text=Transforming%20Inequitable%20Gender%20Norms,-CARE%20is%20committed&text=health%20and%20lives,->

,CARE's%20signature%20approach%20to%20gender%20norm%20transformation%20is%20Social%20Analysis,shape%20their%20lives%20and%20health.

Minimum Standards

The essentials (must have):

- Food safety facilitators must work to form partnerships with food safety experts, universities, private companies, and research institutions to implement food safety training, access market research, and buyers' expectations. Understanding and applying technology across the food distribution systems can also help ensure the implementation of food safety practices at the farm, packing facilities and processing units. Any food safety action must consider female farmers or female workers at the center to prevent exploitation.
- When training farmer groups, make sure that gender is visible and explicit across the links of the value chain to ensure food safety and advocacy for women, youth, indigenous communities, and traditionally marginalized producer groups.
- Include FFBS trainings on food safety practices to secure safe consumption of fresh produce usually consumed raw. These trainings start with planning the crop planting, growing, management, harvests and postharvest, storage and produce transportation. Focus the training on microbial contamination.
- Center the discussion on the need to have a farm food safety plan. The plan should follow some of the HACCP principles. HACCP principles should not be discussed in depth but will provide a useful structure to follow for farmers who want to adopt safe food handling practices whether for home consumption or for sale.
- Fruits and vegetables for fresh consumption must be handled separately from products that are consumed cooked or receive a microorganism kill step. If they are handled together food handlers must manage as if all products were for fresh consumption.
- Focus FFBS training on food safety practices for processing food on preventing chemical, physical and biological contamination. The trainings include raw material reception, processing, packaging, storage, distribution, and allergens. Basically, it is the practical implementation of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HCCP) which refers to hazard identification and assessment and planning to prevent contamination.
- All farmers who want to export or adopt a certification scheme must follow Good Agricultural Practices and Food Safety Practices.

The Minimum Tools:

- Introduction to food safety and safe food handling: what it means and why it's important.
- Farmers and workers training on health and hygiene.
- Food safety practices to manage water for production, harvest, and postharvest.
- The basics of food storage with and/or without refrigeration.
- Dealing with animals: Wildlife, livestock, working animals, and pets.
- Farm food safety plan and a traceability system.

Note: To discuss the use of compost, harvest, and postharvest practices, please see the FFBS Agricultural tools.

Secondary actions (nice to have):

- When training producers on food safety to produce fruits and vegetables for fresh consumption, guide them to implement a farm food safety plan. Help producers to conduct a risk assessment associated with human pathogens (viruses, bacteria, and parasites) by analysing hazards associated with workers, soil amendments, animals, agricultural water and food contact surfaces (tools, equipment, harvest containers, etc.). Once, risks have been identified support farmers to prioritize and select food safety practices and Good Agricultural Practices to reduce risks.
- Help farmers to identify and implement records templates and functional traceability systems on farms to track agricultural products one step forward (to markets) and one step back (to farms).
- Point out the differences between an audit to get a certification (it is paid and voluntary) and a food safety inspection to meet food safety requirements (it is free and mandatory).
- Help producers set up a simple traceability system if they are selling products to formal markets such as supermarkets, restaurants, hotels, corporations, or exporting, you could discuss the traceability tool in the food safety annex.

Guiding Principles

Food safety training will help producers to understand the potential safety risks and hazards associated with the production and processing of their products. In addition, they will have the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of food safety practices at the farm level, packing facilities and plant processing, and the critical links along the supply chain leading to the final product and apply a gender lens to this analysis. Some of the principles to do this are:

- Hazard Analysis, Risk Assessment and Critical Control Points Identification: Every farm, packing facility, ranch, or food processing facility must implement the identification of hazards and the risks associated with them to ensure food safety and protect public health. Once risks are identified food safety practices can be implemented to prevent food contamination.
- Cleaning and Sanitizing: To prevent contamination and cross-contamination it is essential to clean and sanitize all food contact surfaces. Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) must be defined to clean and sanitize utensils, equipment, tools, refrigeration units, and anything that might impact food safety.
- Gender Analysis across the Value Chain Links: Women participate and have roles in all links and value chains, during food safety training facilitators and participants have to dedicate time to understanding bias and unfairness against women and include actions in a food safety plan to transform positively those norms and structures.
- Working with Partners: Implementing complementary approaches to put in place smart and practical solutions to food safety issues promoting innovations and linkages to high-value markets.
- Do No Harm: Emphasize the impacts of unintended food safety issues to ensure transparent and honest learning.

- One Health Approach: Protecting humans, animals, and environments through one health efforts is the priority within food safety. This required multisector participation, collaboration, coordination and producers' capacity strengthen.

References / Guidance Documents

- [Grower Training Manual Version 1.2: Produce Safety Alliance.](#)
- [One Health Fact Sheet](#)
- [17 Reasons to Celebrate Women in Agriculture.](#)
- [WHO Estimates Global Burden of Foodborne Diseases](#)
- [CDC Estimates of Foodborne Illness in the United States.](#)
- [The State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture, Closing the Gender Gap for Development.](#)
- [Agriculture and Market Systems Tools and Approaches Paper \(work in progress\)](#)
- [Social Analysis and Action \(SAA\)](#)
- [FAO's Codex Alimentarius](#)

6. Marketing

Certification



Rationale for Certification Schemes in FFBS

One of the greatest strengths of the FFBS approach is the integration of multiple components including sustainable agriculture practices, market engagement, gender, equity, food/nutrition security, and certification schemes for linkages to high-value markets among others. It is based on adult learning principles offering practical lessons through participatory approaches, and farmers can adapt knowledge, technologies, and practices to their own fields, creating ownership and sustainability of adoption.

Overall, Certification Schemes (CSs) are the perfect subject to be implemented collectively in the FFBS model. CSs define, apply, and monitor voluntary standards to farm operations and food processing units to produce products that are socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable by fairer trading for farmers, workers, communities, and consumers.

Certified agricultural products are those differentiated through specific quality attributes that can be certified under various schemes. Most schemes apply to several types of products such as fruit and vegetables, livestock, crops, wine, and seafood.

Understanding the setting of a certified product price floor would make a difference in choosing a certification scheme that will enhance better prices for producers, where the certification costs are charged to the consumers. If there is no premium price added to the floor prices, those certification costs will increase producers' production costs⁵⁵. Some studies suggest that certification schemes increase prices for certified agricultural products. On the other hand, it has been reported that wages for workers in uncertified productions are greater than those working in certified operations.⁵⁶

Theoretical Basis

More than 43% of the agriculture workforce are women. However, there are regional differences with the agricultural labor force that ranges from 47% in Eastern and Southeastern Asia, 20% in Latin America and the Caribbean, 44% in Near East and North Africa, 35% in Southern Asia, and 50% in Sub-Saharan Africa⁵⁷.

⁵⁵ <https://www.growfurther.org/farm-certification-schemes-do-they-work/#:~:text=Basically%2C%20in%20a%20farm%20certification,quality%20seal%2Dof%2Dapproval.>

⁵⁶ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.4073/csr.2017.3>

⁵⁷ <https://www.fao.org/3/i2050e/i2050e.pdf>

Due to traditional structures, women's contribution is often invisible, and low-paid, and they perform their job under precarious conditions (especially in the textile and agricultural sector). Agriculture, livestock, textile, and handicraft products have characteristics for certification and trade these products in selected markets such as fair trade, natural production, and organic among other labels.

Certification schemes can be focused on thematic areas; for instance, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), Fairtrade, denomination of origin and quality (protected designations of origin (PDOs)) and protected geographical indications (PGIs), Traceability and safety, animal welfare and health, Organic, Natural, Climate, Multi-purpose (Global G.A.P. and Integrated Farm Assurance (IFA), among others⁵⁸. The thematic area defines the scope of the certification standards implemented in production fields or processing units that are verified by conducting an in-situ third audit. Third-party certification adds value in at least four ways: 1. Standard setting, 2. Validating the certification scheme, 3. Certification of producers, producers' associations, and processors, and 4. Enforcement of certification guidelines⁵⁹.

CARE approaches have selected key thematic areas such as women empowerment in agriculture and market systems, gender equity, nutrition, and the specific needs of women producers being attended to in the FFBS model regardless of other thematic.

There are at least three models available for producers to certify their products. The first model involves non-private entities as the initiators of the certification process. It can be a government agency, an international organization, an NGO, and other institutions supporting the producers. In the second model, the process is driven by the private sector (processors, exporters, and retailers). In the third model, the process is driven by a farmers' organization⁶⁰.

Certifications and labels such as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP), Certified Naturally Grown, Organic, Certified Sustainable Seafood, Animal Welfare, Local/Regional Branding, Religious Certification, Social Justice, and Sustainability Certifications, help to inform buyers and consumers about production and processing methods implemented by producers⁶¹.

Minimum Standards

The essentials (must have):

During the training, facilitators guide producers to select a Certification Scheme to link small-scale female producers with high-value markets, identifying a business model (BM) and selecting innovative farm management practices that enhance producers' access and permanence in markets, where they must

⁵⁸ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/699633/IPOL_STU\(2022\)699633_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/699633/IPOL_STU(2022)699633_EN.pdf)

⁵⁹ <https://extension.unr.edu/publication.aspx?PubID=2370>

⁶⁰ <https://www.fao.org/3/y5136e/y5136e08.htm>

⁶¹ <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=c1129>

obtain higher prices for certified products. Before the FFBS training begins, the facilitators should research some of the most common certifiers to allow producers to see the pros and cons when choosing certifiers.

For producers to keep the certified farms, ranches, or processing facilities active, FFBS is the approach to provide long-term extension, training, capacity building, adequate certification control systems, and permanent articulation with high-value markets that ensure the sustainability of the BMs for small-scale women producers. However, CARE could establish agreements with certifiers based on institutional values compatibilities such as gender equity, women empowerment, producers' needs, and real markets' demand for producers' products. Certification Schemes for linkages to high-value markets must consider:

- **Working with partners to certify and sell products** of small-scale women producers. In certification, our priority is products produced and harvested by women.
- **Putting in place an operational business model** led by women producers through certifying small-scale women producers or facilitating third-party certification that can allow them to access stable premium prices in commercial markets, regardless of local market fluctuations. In addition, implementing campaigns or promoting the product based on its certification and differentiation attributes to communicate the specific value to consumers of these agricultural products planted, managed, harvested, packed, and distributed by women's businesses. These activities can take many forms, from labeling products to organizing advocacy events.
- The audit of standards application in the field or at the processing unit should be conducted by a **third-party certification**, or by a second-party certification also called participatory certification.
- Producers or producers' associations that certified **their products must invest prime incomes** in communities' projects in favor of the most vulnerable and traditionally marginalized, women, youth, indigenous and other social disadvantages community residents. The premium price also must sponsor social and business investments, to enhance women's empowerment and strengthen farmers' organizations, and labor standards for decent working conditions.
- The FFBS model considers capacity building through training and other forms of support to producers and their organizations **to improve the sustainability, competitiveness, and inclusivity** of their production systems.
- The certification must allow women producers to have **market contractual terms, bargaining power, and knowledge of market conditions** to improve the welfare of producers.
- Implement activities and actions to visualize **women's ownership of farms, ranches, and processing facilities** as well as women's workforce across different links of value chains on producing food and providing services. This must be part of a pro-women's advocacy plan to defend women's rights and educate consumers.

The Minimum Tools: Facilitators can use the marketing and the certification tools to help producers to choose the best certification scheme for their production or processing units. Some of the useful tools are:

- **Market Planning Part 1:** To guide farmers to estimate average harvests for individual farmers and groups to effectively target appropriate market outlets and supply commitments with certified markets.
- **Market Planning Part 2:** To guide farmers to estimate production, certification, and marketing costs.
- **Designing the business plan:** To support farmers in putting in place a business plan, detailing activities for the production cycle, food safety practices, and certification activities.
- **Gendered Value-Chain Analysis:** It is fundamental to identify where women participate in the value chain links that the project is working on and whether they are present as laborers, producers, processors, value adders, sellers, managers, or business owners.
- **Marketing as a Group:** To help farmers understand how their product can be marketed at the end of the season or year-round in certified markets as a group to reach the volume and quality required by buyers.
- **Roadmap to Certify Farms, Producer Groups, and Processing Units:** To guide producers to choose a certification scheme based on the type of products, thematic area, target market, and certification model.
- **Designing the Certificated Business Model:** This FFBS training tool guide farmers to define a target market (standards and certification scheme with the most advantages), product characteristics that are valued by consumers, costs-efficient of the certification process and maintenance, and key partnerships to increase the bargaining power of small-scale women producers.

Secondary actions (nice to have):

- The premium price would pay for the continuity of FFBS as needed within the group of farmers. To pursue that in agricultural and market projects, farmers would have to comply with voluntary quality and safety standards and procedures in the production field or at processing facilities. Such compliance involves quality and safety assurance, brand development, product niche definition, and strong relationship with markets. A community committee has to agree on and define guidelines to use prime resources to pay facilitators for the continuity of FFBS approach.
- The certification scheme should allow producer associations to participate in the ownership of the certifier organization. There are some certifiers that allow producers and workers to become part of the organization once producers have met the certification standards. These allow producers to have access to technical assistance, a better companionship to link markets, contact with consumers, and voice to define and updates certification standards.

Guiding Principles

- **Women at the Center:** In our certification efforts we look for production systems, certifier partners, market opportunities, training services, and innovation that visualized women's contribution to feeding the world, at the same time to have economic empowerment to reach the plenitude of life.

- **Associations or cooperatives:** In the certifications scheme, it is easier and less expensive to implement certification standards with small-scale producers' groups or small-scale producers' associations, and having a cooperative approach with strong administrative management and access to services can guarantee success in linking to high-value markets⁶².
- **Fair prices of agriculture, livestock products, and other products:** Promote certification schemes for women producers and women workforce that allow reach markets that pay fair prices and value product quality, time, knowledge, and effort invested by women in feeding the world. Also, having enough resources to invest in women's education and empowerment and community development projects. Advocacy: Through certification schemes, we reinforce networks to advocate at the global, regional, and national levels for women's empowerment, fairer wages, fair trade, and fair prices, ensuring sustainable business, women and social disadvantage group rights.
- **Global Education:** Design campaigns to increase consumer awareness and encourage responsible food purchasing and positively change unfair traditional social norms and structures in agriculture. Transparency and traceability to not harm in any form in producing, harvesting, packing, and certifying agricultural, handicraft, and livestock products.
- **Promote CARE's SuPER Food Systems principles:** All certification efforts are a base for Sustainable, Productive, Equitable, and Resilient production systems, businesses, families, and communities. It is a priority to create economic opportunities for women, youth, indigenous communities, and disadvantaged farmers.

References / Guidance Documents

- [Farm Certification Schemes – Do They Work?](#)
- [The Women Who make Our Clothes are Invisible. It's Time to Change That.](#)
- [The State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development](#)
- [Farm Certification Schemes for Sustainable Agriculture](#)
- [Adding Value to Agriculture: Branding and Certification](#)
- [FAO Overview of Existing Standards and Certification Programmes](#)
- [Common Labels and Certifications Used to Market Sustainable Agriculture Products](#)
- [Global GAP](#)
- [Fair Trade](#)
- [Rainforest Alliance](#)
- [Fairtrade USA](#)
- [USDA Organic](#)
- [EU Development Cooperation and Ethical Certification Schemes: Impact, Transparency and Traceability](#)

⁶² [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EXPO_STU\(2020\)603487](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EXPO_STU(2020)603487)

7. Nutrition



Rationale for Nutrition in FFBS

Malnutrition is a major global health issue for people of all ages, especially in vulnerable communities across the global south. The impact of malnutrition on the individual is significant, well-documented and acknowledged as **impacting not only child survival, but also development, education, and productive activity as adults**. Individuals in rapid periods of growth requiring caloric and nutrient needs, such as infants, adolescents, and pregnant and breastfeeding women, are more susceptible to the effects of poor nutrition. Eliminating malnutrition in young children in low- and middle-income countries can substantially **boost the gross national product, prevent child death, improve school attainment, increase wages, and reduce poverty**. When well-nourished children become adults, it can break the inter-generational cycle of poverty.⁶³

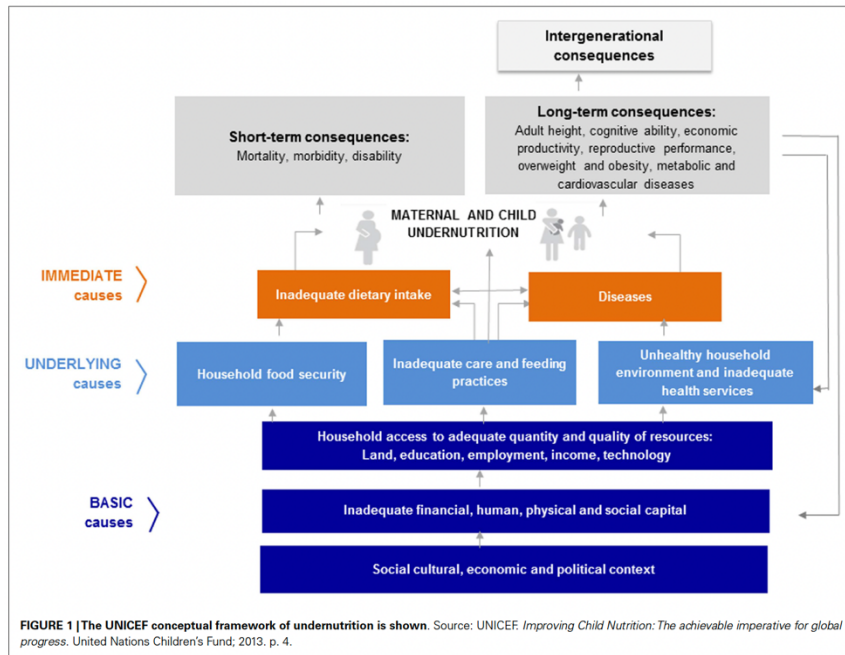
Preventing malnutrition is central to CARE's **She Feeds the World framework**, and a key component in FFBS. Good nutrition positively impacts and is impacted by advancements in health, education, employment, women's empowerment, and the productive capacity of women and men. Nutrition sensitive and specific interventions must be strategically and thoroughly integrated across sectors to achieve sustainable and equitable nutrition impact. FFBS Nutrition contributes to achieving Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2 – No Poverty and Zero Hunger – as well as SDG 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing. Alternately, achieving SDG Gender Equality contributes to good nutrition.

Theoretical Basis

Nutrition-sensitive approaches focus on the underlying and basic determinants of malnutrition; those factors that create an enabling environment for sustainable impact.

The way we talk about nutrition-sensitive approaches has evolved since UNICEF first developed the nutrition conceptual framework (Figure 1). Immediate causes are addressed with nutrition-specific interventions, whereas underlying and basic causes are addressed with nutrition-sensitive approaches. When **research showed** that merely increasing yields and agricultural income did not result in the outcomes anticipated for improvement in child nutrition, it inspired impact pathway mapping which

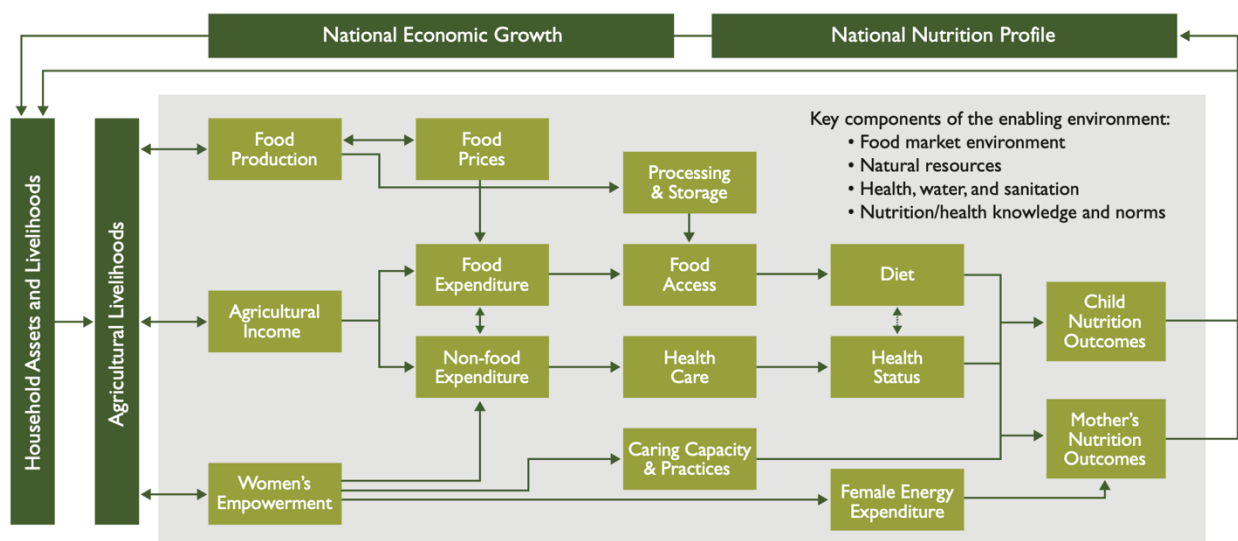
⁶³ <https://oxfam.app.box.com/s/2aeh0nbf9z23v2yk474w0tw04l02fkg>



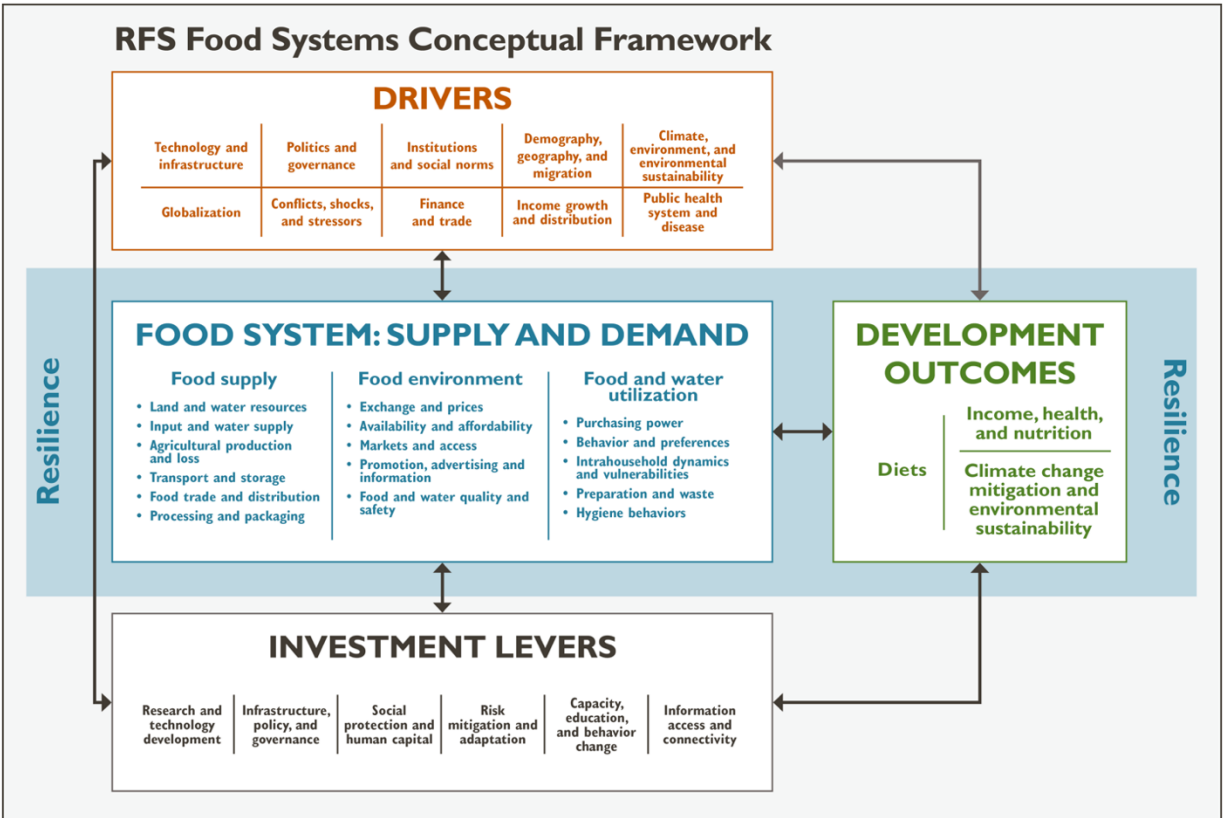
resulted in the collectively agreed upon Agriculture-to-Nutrition Pathways (Figure 2). The three primary pathways illustrated how **agriculture production, income, and women's empowerment** interplay and influence access, availability, and consumption of health diets. Most recently, the concept of food systems has been adopted. The food system looks not only at three aspects of production, food environment, and consumption. It also

considered the many drivers that affect these parts of the food system and are affected by them all impacting outcomes around diet, nutrition, and the environment.

Additionally, the food system conceptual framework (Figure 3 is **USAID's version**) notes the investment levers that can influence the drivers to positively impact the various parts of the food system. While the USAID conceptual framework does not call out cross-cutting areas such as gender, youth, and inclusion, these are focus areas, and in particular, **gender equity and women's empowerment** is of utmost importance when working within the food system for improved nutrition.



Adapted for Feed the Future by Anna Herforth, Jody Harris, and SPRING, from Gillespie, Harris, and Kadiyala (2012) and Headey, Chiu, and Kadiyala (2011).



RFS Framework USAID Advancing Nutrition

It is also good to note that nutrition-sensitive approaches are not limited to the sectors of agriculture and gender. There are many sectors that have the possibility of being nutrition-sensitive because of how they are known to indirectly influence nutrition such as education, WASH, social protection, climate, and health systems.

Minimum Standards

The essentials (must have):

- **Onboarding and training of staff on nutrition concepts** including the role of a balanced diet, eating from all food groups, concerns around nutrition-related non-communicable and communicable diseases, and the importance of gender equity, women’s empowerment, and inclusion for supporting nutrition outcomes.
- **Conduct and use formative research** related to women’s roles in agriculture/ livestock production and inputs, finance, and market access contextualized for each country/ regional contexts; physical, cultural, and behavioral barriers to consumption of a nutritious/diverse diet for women and children; identify the drivers of the food system which influence production, food environment and consumption.

- **Determine nutrient gaps** including using statistics around anthropometry and nutrient deficiencies. Also look at practices around where livestock are kept in the compound and the exposure of children to animals and animal and human feces.
- **Include indicators for FFBS nutrition components** that are appropriate to the activities and length of the specific project. Nutrition-specific indicators might include nutrient status (e.g., iron and vitamin A), infant, child, and women’s anthropometry, and rates of breastfeeding and young child feeding practices. Nutrition-sensitive **indicators** might include women’s diet diversity, minimum acceptable diets for children, and women’s decision-making over household food production, consumption, and use of money.
- **Integrate Nutrition Elements with the Sustainable Agriculture Toolkit:** Support increased production of diverse, nutritious crops in demonstration plots through experimental practices, which moves away from monoculture and supports increased diet diversity. Additionally, modules in the Sustainable Agriculture Toolkit can be adapted for various sizes/plots of land, including homestead/kitchen gardens.
- **Integrate adolescents’, women’s, infants, young children’s (AMIYCN) nutrition knowledge transfer throughout FFBS manual and toolkits,** with more robust sections on the more technical pieces. These include the importance intra-household food allocation, other food behaviors and taboos, breastfeeding, complementary feeding, food safety, animal source food consumption, and relevant information related to targeted value chains and other crops/ livestock/ garden/ neglected and underutilized crops⁶⁴
- **Develop context specific descriptions of food groups.** Consider whether the country’s MoH has its own depictions/tools. Is the audience low or non-literate? What concepts will the audience understand? For example, categorizing foods into three groups based on their role has worked in some context: Energy, Protection, Growth/Strength corresponding to staples/fats, fruits/vegetables, and protein.
- **Engage men and boys on nutrition and gender trainings.** Men and boys play an integral role in supporting and maintaining shifts in **societal norms** in order to promote nutrition. Research has demonstrated repeatedly that in order to sustainably and impactfully improve gender equity, without causing harm, setting a foundation of understanding and support is **necessary**.
- **Create guidelines on linking existing** women’s/ girl’s groups to FFBS, VSLAs, farmer & producer groups, and youth groups. These groups can be platforms for social and behavior change communication on dietary diversity, feeding practices and nutritional status of women and children.
- **Develop Social and Behavior Change (SBC) strategy** which includes nutrition and gender⁶⁵. The strategy should encompass the life of the project and the specific ways that messages will be transferred. Identify key behaviors the project seeks to promote related to nutrition (specific or sensitive), and **design** a SBC plan to address the barriers and facilitators for these key behaviors,

⁶⁴ <https://doi.org/10.3389/fphar.2021.809866>

⁶⁵ https://www.advancingnutrition.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/usaaid_an_illustrative_behaviors_2022.pdf

including a monitoring plan to ensure that the strategy is eliciting the anticipated effects. Nutrition SBC strategies should include handwashing with soap, food hygiene, baby feces management, safe water for drinking, and other baby WASH principles.⁶⁶

Secondary actions (nice to have):

- **Use biofortified seed (staples and other foods)** as the way forward in terms of local / last mile reach. Biofortification of local traditional staples, like pearl millet, wheat and other local foods can play a crucial role in improving nutrition of households in last-mile communities.
- **Build skills in local food preparation.** These lessons would emphasize complementary foods and practicing food safety and hygiene. Men and youth⁶⁷ should also be involved in practical preparation/ demonstration events, linked to or in addition to FFBS learning sessions.
- **Use standard guidelines (and resource partners)** to how outputs from FFBS & home gardens can be processed and sold by local entrepreneurs to produce nutrient-dense and climate smart local foods targeting young children and adolescents.
- **Influence the policies and practices of governments and corporations** to improve nutrition for women and children, **small-scale farmers** and wage workers and provide equitable livelihoods.
- **Engage with the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement** through the appropriate ministry or Civil Society Alliance⁶⁸

Guiding Principles

- **Nutrition is a science:** The 2021 Lancet Series brings new evidence on maternal and child nutrition. As with other sciences, consumption of and use of macro and micronutrients can help – or harm – health.⁶⁹ Consult reliable evidence-based information.
- **Healthy Diets:** We categorize a healthy diet using food groups while taking into consideration nutritional adequacy because this most directly connects food production and health, and because most dietary guidelines are based primarily on food groups.⁷⁰ Beyond diversity, healthy diets also include quality and quantity of food consumed, as appropriate to consumer desire and cultural context.
- **Gender and Inclusion:** Women and other marginalized populations are at risk for malnutrition due to societal norms and inequitable policies. Women often have increased nutritional needs and may be at a greater risk of food insecurity. Improving nutrition for women, adolescent girls,

⁶⁶ <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/7076/file/UNICEF-ESA-Baby-WASH-Programming-2020.pdf>

⁶⁷ <https://www.advancingnutrition.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/usaaid-an-engaging-youth-in-food-systems-2022.pdf>

⁶⁸ <https://scalingupnutrition.org/about/what-we-do/priorities/ensuring-sustainable-food-systems>

⁶⁹ <https://www.thelancet.com/series/maternal-child-undernutrition-progress>

⁷⁰ [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)31788-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31788-4)

and children lays the foundation for their education, productivity, and economic empowerment. Interventions need to include men and boys to be holistic and sustainable.

- **Do no harm:**⁷¹⁷²⁷³ Do economic and government policies leave vulnerable households behind? Will interventions put households at risk? (e.g., Do value chains promote unhealthy products? Expensive technology? Time and labor burden for women? Exposure to hazards? Cause conflict?). **Analyze the context to avoid negative consequences.**

References / Guidance Documents

- [Field Guide, Farmer Field Schools on Nutrition & Local Food Plants](#)
- [Gender transformative approaches for food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture – A compendium of fifteen good practices](#)
- [International Dietary Data](#)
- [Illustrative Behaviors to Improve Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture](#)
- [Engaging Youth in Food Systems for Improved Nutrition Outcomes](#)
- [Resilient, sustainable and nutrition-sensitive food systems](#)
- [Maternal and Child Undernutrition Progress](#)
- [Food in the Anthropocene: The EAT–Lancet Commission on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems](#)
- [Nutrition: Let Agriculture “Do No Harm”](#)
- [“First, do no harm”: Identifying the risks of agricultural interventions for nutrition to avoid or reduce them](#)
- [Nutrition-Sensitive Food Systems: From Rhetoric to Action](#)
- [Sénégal : Éducation Nutritionnelle aux Producteurs Agricoles](#)

⁷¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/nutrition-let-agriculture-do-no-harm>

⁷² <https://www.coordinationsud.org/wp-content/uploads/20.-Note-C2A-n-20-ANG.pdf>

⁷³ [https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(13\)61053-3.pdf](https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(13)61053-3.pdf)

8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning



Rationale for MEL in FFBS

Performance monitoring in FFBS is, primarily, aimed at gathering project performance information that contributes and impacts five critical areas of change. These are enhancement in yields, income, gender equality, resilience and nutrition. Monitoring these impact areas supports project/program teams to analyze the current situation, identify problems, find solutions, This allows them to keep project activities on schedule, measure progress towards intermediate outcomes and make decisions about human, financial and material resources for course correction.

Timely and effective management of the monitoring function should lead towards sustainable and significant improvements in FFBS producers' conditions or well-being, reflecting enhancement in income, productivity, gender equality, resilience, and nutrition. FFBS has eight major interrelated components: Facilitation, Gender, Agriculture, Marketing, Nutrition, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning, and Service Systems Strengthening & Social Accountability. Adherence to high quality monitoring and evaluation standards creates clear and actionable results.

To facilitate management of the above, PME encompasses a set of nine tools:

1. **Participatory Performance Tracking Self-Assessment Tool:** This tool helps to track individual FFBS member adoption of key improved agriculture practices and group performance as promoted through the project and develop action plan to address areas of concern.
2. **Gender Dialogue Monitoring Tool:** To identify emerging trends and leanings from the gender dialogues to track impact on group members, spouses, and other session participants' level of behavior change.
3. **Life- End of Season Reflection:** This tool helps to identify the different challenges and achievements that group members feel they have experienced during the season.
4. **Focus Group Discussion:** To track social and behavior changes of project's direct participants. It helps understand relationships, underlying reasons, challenges and risks in the attainment of results.
5. **Outcome Mapping-Gender Progress Marker Monitoring Tool:** This tool helps to track social and behavior changes of project's direct participants. It serves to monitor how relationships are changing, what risks or negative changes may be surfacing, and how to respond to them.

6. **Personal Transformation Tracker:** This tool promotes self-reflection among staff, supports them to critically examine their own gender biases, power relations, and privileges and develop action plan to address those.
7. **AIIR Tool:** Complete Advocacy, Influencing and Impact Reporting Tool to ensure constructive use of the lessons for capturing scaling up practice at multiple levels. (Can be found in the advocacy section of this manual)

Theoretical Basis

The MEAL components of the project are built to meet the project management requirements in four areas: Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning. Tools and capacities planned under each of these components are envisaged to strengthen MEAL. **These include:**

Measurement of Impact

This dimension deals with assessing the changes in the areas of impact and outcomes and telling our impact story at an overall organizational level.

- Assessing the relationship between a program's theory of change and degree of changes in various contexts
- Tracks implementation effectiveness and correlates strategies and results
- Provides actionable evidence to the program ecosystem
- Produces and captures evidence to influence the scaling agenda and for knowledge building and advocacy

Monitoring- Quality, Performance and Progress

This dimension aims to monitor project performance for strengthening the implementation to maximize impact:

- Monitoring minimum standards of quality and efficiency
- Leverage participatory oversights and robust data analytics to monitor and forecast efficiency/ effectiveness of implementation and to scale up good practices

Learning and Sharing

This dimension aims to have a systematic approach to learn and share lessons:

- Plan thematic-focus-areas-based learning and sharing
- Institutionalization of learning platforms, forums, and events
- Managing archiving and retrieving knowledge assets

Accountability building

This dimension aims to enhance ownership and accountability across different hierarchy:

- Organize FFBS Group based, partner, Impact group feedback
- Organize reflective exercises and end of season reflection

Minimum Standards

Monitoring and Evaluation (must have):

- Develop the performance monitoring and evaluation system of FFBS with a robust MEAL Framework based on the needs and capacity of all key stakeholders- participants, donors, government, private players or other community-based groups. The MEAL framework should cover indicators related to all relevant impact areas of interventions covering (**nutrition** – diversified crop and vegetable production and consumption, nutrition SBC education; **agriculture/livestock/fisheries/forestry**- sustainable and climate smart practices, **market**-access to inputs and output market local/global, access to finance, value addition and collective marketing, **gender**- access and control over information, resources, decision-making, **facilitation**-completeness, attendance and feedback knowledge/skill transfer).
- Conduct the baseline assessment aligned with the project’s key results framework.
- Adapt and contextualize an array of tools for performance monitoring, evaluation and learning based on the crops/livestock/fishery/forestry, such as the Participatory Performance Tracking tool (individual practice tracking sheet and group maturity performance tracker), the Gender Progress Marker Monitoring Tool, the Gender Dialogue Monitoring Tool, the End of Season Reflection, the Post-Harvest Evaluative Focused Group Discussion and the AIIR tool.
- Establish a system for periodic review of achievements based on sound data analysis and sensemaking with reports of on track, off track and recommendations for actions.
- Develop an action planning-matrix with priorities for the following months with clearly outlined responsibilities.
- Ensure data validation for quality of data by verifying validity, reliability, integrity, timelines and precision.

Minimum Standards (nice to have):

- Define a meaningful and manageable set of qualitative/quantitative indicators for feedback and accountability mechanisms to assess effectiveness and efficiency.
- Hold an annual review to capture lessons, challenges, and issues to be acted upon for improvement and to support identification of potential for scale.
- Document stories of success and collective learning for continuous improvement and adaptation.
- Complete the Advocacy, Influencing and Impact Reporting Tool to ensure constructive use of the lessons for capturing scaling up practice at multiple levels.
- Use CARE markers – for example, Gender Marker; Resilience Marker; Governance Marker.

MEL Principles:

- **Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation:** FFBS adopts participatory approaches for MEL for ensuring accountability. This also facilitates behavior change as we put project participants in charge of assessing themselves, identifying their own gaps, and finding solutions. FFBS uses simple tools that producers and community members can use easily for their own assessment

and course corrections. These participatory tools also help management teams to generate and analyze data at various levels to identify gaps and adapt accordingly.

- **Conducive to Learning and Action Planning:** Generating performance trends can help enable dialogue and reflection amongst participants, creating a richer experience and greater impact.
- **Conducive to Adaptation:** Data collection and analysis of key programmatic insights allows us to constantly adapt and improve. These insights include changes in income, productivity, gender equality, resilience, and nutrition.
- **Consider Ethical Implications:** All MEL practices and methods must promote honesty, consent, and integrity while respecting the confidentiality and dignity of stakeholders.
- **Dynamic and Lead to Action:** Adaptable monitoring, evaluation and learning processes allow us to instill accountability and learning moments throughout the cycle of a project or initiative. These learning moments inform future changes in policy, strategy, or implementation.
- **Conducive to Accountability:** By prioritizing transparency and clarity, project data can clearly communicate what we do, where we work, and how effective we are. This includes accountability to participants, donors, and other stakeholders.

Minimum Set of Tools for FFBS 2.0

- **Must Have (non-negotiable)-** What we currently have in the toolkit, and additional as in the proposal e.g., PPT Tool; Dialogue Monitoring Tool; Lifeline: End of Season Reflection Tool; FGD with FFBS producers and their household members; Gender Progress Marker monitoring tool; Personal Transformation Tracker tool; AIIR Tool
- **Secondary actions (nice to have):** Tools within thematic area that FFBS Scale-Up Program, other FWS Program e.g., Feedback and Accountability Mechanism; Annual reviews; Story collections; CARE Markers

References / Guidance Documents

- [PPT Tool](#)
- [Gender Dialogue Monitoring Tool](#)
- [Lifeline: End of Season Reflection tool](#)
- FGD with FFBS producers and their household members
- Outcome Mapping -Gender Progress Marker Monitoring Tool
- [Personal Transformation Tracking Tool](#)
- AIIR tool
- Feedback and Accountability Mechanism
- Annual reviews
- Story collections
- CARE markers

9. Service Systems Strengthening and Social Accountability in FFBS

Community Score Card



Rationale for Community Score Card in FFBS

Fostering meaningful engagement between service providers and users is necessary to improve service delivery in the Farmer Field Business School (FFBS) Model. With increased needs for varying technical information and services within the FFBS, a structured way of engaging with various actors necessitates improving accountability using approaches such as the **Community Score Card (CSC)**. Measures like the CSC contribute to Service Systems Strengthening and Social Accountability (4SA). The CSC is a simple and inclusive approach that allows farmers and community members to actively participate in assessing, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluating the provision of services in agriculture. It provides a platform for community members to actively engage resource allocation and service systems strengthening. By using the CSC, farmers can engage in a two-way dialogue with public servants responsible for allocating and utilizing resources in agriculture extension work. This human rights-based and person-driven approach recognizes that both farmers (service users) and public officials (service providers) play important roles in the process. Through the CSC, farmers have an open platform to voice their needs, concerns, and suggestions, while public officials can understand the realities on the ground and collaborate with farmers to make informed decisions. By fostering dialogue and active participation, the CSC empowers farmers and public officials to work together towards the improvement of agriculture extension services in a transparent and inclusive manner.

“The main goal of the Community Score Card being to positively influence the quality, efficiency and accountability with which services are accessed, provided and utilized at different levels. The concerns of farmers as users and public servants are aggregated into a list of indicators that can be rated or scored over time to track service change delivery after engaging in dialogue and agreeing steps to improve shortfalls identified in the list indicators presented as score card”.

The unique added value of the CSC is bringing together a variety of groups with varying social power and creating an inclusive, safe space to share their experiences, express their needs, and mobilize

communities to collective action. Moreover, it provides women, youth and other marginalized groups in society an opportunity to challenge patriarchal norms and discriminatory behaviours.

Originally designed to improve community health centers' services⁷⁴ (A Journey through CSC in Malawi), the Community Score Card approach has effectively been used to improve the quality-of-service provision in agriculture, climate change, education, and government budgeting. In FFBS, the CSC will be used for creating safe spaces for engagement of duty bearers and service users to jointly identify bottlenecks and co-create context specific solutions in the delivery of agriculture extension services and access to information of such as availability of seeds, market, among other farmer's needs. The collaboration of the duty bearers and communities allows the fusion of traditional insights into the service delivery system and vice versa, along with accountability of the community structures involved in the FFBS.

When CARE first innovated the CSC, it was used as a stand-alone participatory governance approach to improve the quality of services.

Over the last several years, CARE has used the CSC as both a stand-alone intervention and embedded in larger projects.

CARE has also used the CSC in a variety of ways, including for the following:

- Quality service improvement
- Implementation improvement
- Evidence generation for advocacy
- Assessment, planning, and monitoring and evaluation

Community Score Card approach is simple and can be adapted in many contexts. They can be in-person or remote. The Score Cards can be on paper, digital⁷⁵, or be displayed on the walls of agriculture notice boards, schools and health centers - whatever works best for the community. The CSC stages can be adapted to other participatory processes within the FFBS such as participatory performance tracker but should form part of an on-going assessment process. CSC can take several forms and combines several participatory tools – FGDs, Scoring, social mapping (which the FFBS toolkit advises on how to use). The CSC process should be repeated on a biannual basis to ensure follow up of Score Cards and the completion of an action plan.

Theoretical Basis

The **CARE's Gender Equality Framework's theory of change** is based on long standing experience that achieving gender equality and women's voice requires transformative change. CARE's extensive evidence base emphasizes that change needs to take place and be sustained in **all three domains** to achieve this

⁷⁴ <https://www.care.org/our-work/health/strengthening-healthcare/community-score-card-csc/>

⁷⁵ <https://www.kwantu.net/portal/kwantu/care-partnership>

impact. FFBS programs address two of the three domains (**building agency** of people of all genders and life stages and **changing relations** between). Continuous adaption is needed to **transform structures** so that participants can realize their full potential in their public and private lives and contribute equally to, and benefit equally from, social, political and economic development.⁷⁶ A Collective Reflections Report on using CARE's Gender Equality Framework in pursuit of our goals towards Vision 2030, gathered from staff around the globe lifted what is difficult and what we can do more of to ensure gender equality remains at the heart of CARE's programmes:

- The report highlighted gaps in **agency**, especially in informal areas of building self-esteem and confidence among our program participants.
- The transformation of power relations at the household level is going very well, but many find it challenging to do so in other environments, including in our own partnerships.
- Staff noted difficulties in centering the voices of women in formal and informal settings and supporting feminist structures to challenge inequitable systems.

The main goal of the Community Score Card would be to positively influence the quality, efficiency and accountability with which services are provided at different levels. The strategy to achieve this focuses on convening power to strengthen systems, providing the platform for input from both user and provider. By building relations between farmers and public service providers, this enables women to engage with the local public service systems, interrogate, advocate and influence changes related to all the three domains of change within the FFBS. This includes potentially engaging Women Led Organisations (WLOs) and Women Rights Organisations (WROs) who are stakeholders as part of the structural transformations, as well as challenging inequities within market systems by shifting norms, policies and practices which exclude women from decision-making.

Minimum Standards

The essentials (must have):

CARE's long experience with the process identified enabling factors and minimum conditions for successfully conducting the CSC in the following spheres or with the following groups: (1) CARE organization; (2) donors; (3) general environment where the CSC will be implemented; and (4) CSC participants (citizens, service providers, authorities) at the local, district, and national levels. When implementing CSC at a minimum, its customization to suit context should include:

Preparatory work and planning that will ensure:

- **Establishing the basis for a CSC process in the FFBS:** Aligning the CSC approach with the FFBS seasonal calendar; mapping of Ag Ext Services; introduce the CSC process have and buy in from community, district, and national level stakeholders. This is to ensure the work does not coincide

⁷⁶ <https://www.care-international.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/CARE%20Commitments%20for%20GEF%20June%202021.pdf>

with when farmers are busy in the field, and balance ensuring activities/issues during the FFBS curriculum roll out. This work will occur with the agriculture extension service provision, to identify the intended geographic coverage of the exercise and the unit of analysis/service e.g a Farmer Field Training Center. Identification and training of community-based facilitators and mapping of and introductory engagement with community, relevant government agencies and development actors will also be important.

- **Situating roles and responsibilities: Establishing** clear accountability lines for community-based facilitators (CBFs) on how to conduct introductory and buy in meetings with Community, District and National Government Agencies and development actors that will impact outcomes of agricultural extension and nutrition services .
- **Populating the Resource Tracking Matrix:** Providing an overview of citizens' entitlements and current gaps in addressing these entitlements based on national standards and mandates for the sector.

Generating Score Cards for Communities and Providers:

Actual implementation of the CSC involves agreeing on indicators that will form the basis for scoring and monitoring. Assessing and scoring service availability, provision, access and utilization using the agreed community indicators by homogeneous groups will be the initial focus. Then, consolidating scores from homogeneous focus groups to come with one Community Score Card. Current issues arising from the FFBS will be evaluated and solution will be devised. This work will involve the use of participatory tool such FGDs, pile sorter and others to group issues and generate the Score Cards. Using the Master Plan on Engagements Scheduled and who to invite, reminders need to be sent by FFBS facilitators in advance.

- The facilitating team will need to lead a process of **triangulating commonly generated global issues** and indicated which have been derived from the input tracker, SAA process, PPT, gender dialogues; cluster similar issues. These will need to be validated by the FFBS Training Center during prioritization.
- At a minimum, **capture the different issues emanating from respective groups** (men, women, leadership and youth). Here you will mix issues from the different groups to come up with common issues/emerging themes representing that location or area. Using pile sorting or similar method, identify the major issues, group them and from those groups develop indicators and list the issues related to each indicator under it.
- **Explain the source of the issues, indicators and the scoring method.** CARE's experience in the space has enabled the acceleration of the indicator development phase and provided that list in the Toolkit. It is essential to validate and prioritize these indicators with respect to the local context and agree on a scoring system-numbers or symbols. Members must participate in homogenous groups (GDs) such as: women, men, youth, children, community leaders, vulnerable populations, extension workers etc. Remember to score capture reasons for score given.
- **Create the Score Card with the users (communities), starting with homogenous groups and then a consolidated Community Score Card.**
- **Create the Score Card with the providers.** The facilitating team will need to validate the issues with the providers as well. The Resource Tracking Matrix will come in handy to understand why

there are gaps in the system. Preferably use a method like that used in the generation of community Score Card. Remember to capture reasons for score given.

Interface Meeting, Joint Action Planning, Monitoring and Repeat Cycles:

- **Preparing for joint dialogue (the “interface meeting”)** is necessary as this culminates the accountability part of the service being scored. Refer Generic Community Score Card Toolkit Phase II Stage 4. When all the previous steps are completed, there will be scores from the service users, as well as scores from service providers. The interface meeting brings together service users and providers for them to share and discuss the matrices, their scores and the reasons for the scores. It is important that key decision makers (chiefs, group village headmen, district officials, ministry officials, local politicians, etc.) are present to ensure instant feedback on the issues and responsibility to take issues and the plan of action forward. The interface meeting might become confrontational if not handled carefully and correctly. It is important that a skilled facilitator with negotiation skills and a strong personality oversees this meeting. Make sure that facilitators, service users, as well as service providers, are well prepared for this meeting and understand its purpose. Avoid personal confrontations.
- **A locally led joint action plan** (including district-level meetings, feedback and dialogue, consolidation of findings across communities) is also developed and it must capture who is responsible for what delivery and by when, taking into account the FFBS seasonal calendar.
- **Consolidate Action Plans and build up monitoring and develop advocacy asks.** It is important to recognize that the Score Card process does not stop immediately after generating a first round of scores and joint action plan. Follow-up steps are required to jointly ensure implementation of plans and collectively monitor the outcomes. Repeated cycles of the Score Card are needed to institutionalize the practice – the information collected needs to be used on a sustained basis, i.e., to be fed back into the service provider’s current decision-making processes as well as its M&E system. The Score Card tool generates issues which can be used in advocacy efforts to raise awareness of the problems and push for solutions. These advocacy efforts can also help integrate the solutions into local policies and systems for the sustainability of results.
- **Create a master plan for community roll out on CSC Tools.** Thorough preparation for a community engagement on the CSC process is crucial and should preferably begin a month prior to mobilizing a community gathering. First will be general preparations to establish the basis for a CSC program in an area. That is, plan for who will be facilitator of CSC, when how long will a cycle take, who will need to be present during the in the Toolkit phase and create a list of necessary materials (i.e., flipchart, markers, notebooks to record the process, pens) for the process.
- **Repeat cycles biannually** with more focus on scoring, interface meeting and reviewing progress of action plans.

Secondary actions (nice to have):

- **Use a rapid context analysis** (like a Political Economy Analysis) that puts gender or similar and developing a social map.
- **Digitized the CSC process.** The idea for a digital CSC platform emerged in response to critiques of social accountability tools. Namely that social accountability tools (like CSC) tended to be

effective at achieving results locally, but had less impact when it came to working more strategically. To take advantage of opportunities to influence change at national and sub-national levels, programs needed ways to digitize and analyze data generated from CSC across programs and sectors. The digitized process helps:

- Generate dashboards that highlight indicators and progress on issues raised by citizens.
- Visualize at a glance which issues are not being solved in action plans.
- Generate advocacy reports that compile citizen data.
- **Link the CSC to advocacy approaches.** Mapping women movements and other strategic platforms that can amplify and influence National and Regional improvement of service delivery and multiply impact.
- **Post-implementation activities** such as collecting and consolidating feedback at scale within a program can help the team understand the depth and vertical integration for high-level advocacy. This could include consolidating CSC across districts, regions and countries.

Guiding Principles

- **Ownership:** Decision coming out of CSC need to be fully inspired by service users and providers.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Engaging the entire gender spectrum, through an intersectional feminist perspective, to bring all voices to the table for actions and decision-making on actions planned.
- **Locally led:** Action Plans need to be led by the local FFBS team, and CARE can support with resources when necessary.
- **Do No Harm:** A risk analysis to ensure the community subscribes to accountability and that the situation will not dissipate to confrontation.

References / Guidance Documents

- [Community Score Card Toolkit](#)
- [Social Audits for Local Development](#)
- [Putting Gender in Political Economy Analysis](#)
- [Voice and Accountability in Climate-Change](#)
- [Conflict Sensitivity](#)
- Participatory Performance Tracker (Reference Tool 7.1 in FFBS Toolkit, Second Edition)
- [Governance Marker Guidance](#)
- [Kwantu App-Digitized CSC](#)
- [Supporting social movements guidance note](#)
- [Supporting the Women's Movement](#)

9. Service Systems Strengthening and Social Accountability in FFBS

Advocacy



Rationale for Advocacy in FFBS

For the Farmer Field Business School (FFBS) to meet its scale-up goal of **directly improving the lives of 25 million rural poor people** with a focus on women small-scale farmers and their families, it will need to prioritize advocacy interventions that can generate impact at scale. Integrating advocacy pathway to scale allows for policy change to take place at the local, country, and global levels.

CARE defines advocacy as the deliberate process of influencing those who make decisions to develop, change, and implement policies. In FFBS program, advocacy implementation aims to ignite a system-level impact by working with government, private and public institutions on activities that influence policy adoption, allocation, and co-financing of resources to FFBS activities. Advocacy enables this by building positive relationships with governments, donors, and private sector allies who share FFBS's goals. These include strengthening accountability, gathering evidence of what works, and learning from the communities to strengthen further advocacy to ensure its continued relevance and focus. FFBS adoption into official government policies will be a game-changer, not only with regards to scaling the program globally, but for improving the status of women by helping them to be successful farmers, businesspeople, leaders, and agents of change.

For FFBS, the main advocacy objective is to ensure that the model will be adopted by various governments, private sector actors, and international development agencies. In some countries, this adoption of the model may help improve implementation of existing policies while, in others, it may guide future policy reform and allocation of budget to support FFBS implementation.

Theoretical Basis

Advocacy will enable FFBS stakeholders to adopt policies and budgets to build capacity and soft skills of farmers and meaningfully participate in community-based dialogues around market engagement, gender

and empowerment issues, nutrition practices, and performance monitoring. This can occur through inclusive governance approaches such as the Community Score Card (CSC) approach. FFBS is a multisector, integrated, and gender-transformative model that requires the combined efforts of many actors to successfully advocate for its implementation into policy. In FFBS programming, advocacy is a key pathway in transforming formal structures that enable and fulfill the rights of people of all genders. These formal structures may include laws, policies, and domestic/global institutions. Advocacy will also contribute to non-formal structural changes in social and gender norms, values, and practices that can be influenced by civil society and through policy changes. Advocacy complements and multiplies the impact of direct programming and integrates well with other pathways to scale at CARE, especially the service systems strengthening, impact to scale, and social movements.

Advocacy in FFBS is guided by CARE's Gender Equality Framework Theory of Change and builds women's and girls' agency by recognizing and involving them as activists and leaders to influence decisions that affect their lives at all levels, including strengthening their understanding of political structures and policy influencing. Their active involvement in advocacy is both based on and contributes to their voice, skills, and self-confidence. Advocacy promotes more gender-equal relations by bringing women and girls in all their diversity to the decision-making tables to negotiate their agendas, transform power relations, facilitate equal relationships, promote social accountability, and support women's and girls' groups to engage in collective interactions with the state, private sector, and other authorities.

Minimum Standards

The essentials (must have), tailor-made for each context, should include:

- Advocacy approaches that are integrated and budgeted into the full lifecycle of the FFBS model, from proposal development to final program closeout. The level and type of budget requirements depend on the scope of activity, the role CARE may play, the level of support needed from other parts of CARE, and the model being pursued.
- Evidence-based decision making at all levels that considers the most impactful strategies for the audience, environment, and context. In addition to drawing on local context, we should learn from policy analysis and evidence from CARE's work and others' work to inform our advocacy priorities. Using data and reporting by academia, governments, and UN agencies will help too.
- Partnerships with other actors and organizations to amplify our joint messages and foster a collective impact. It is necessary to identify stakeholders and play a convening or capacity-building role among partners, including governments. This also helps CARE understand its value-add.
- Relationships with key international, national policymakers as well as with various CARE teams, especially in cases where we have more than one CARE team engaging governments, there is need for collaborate on an engagement plan to avoid duplication and maximum the engagements.
- The regular use of the Governance Marker to assess the level of inclusive governance and the system impact of FFBS on structures, relations, and agency.

- Consistency in measuring advocacy outcomes (e.g., changes in policies/ budget allocations in favor of FFBS activities) and impact (number of people affected by positive change and or long-term change in structures). Capture all major advocacy wins through an AIIR tool.

Secondary actions (nice to have):

- Countries with advocacy goals must have at least one dedicated staff member to facilitate FFBS advocacy planning and implementation.
- Partner with ILKA teams to generate and leverage evidence from the country programs to create messages to influence decision-makers (particularly by sex and age disaggregated data) to center women and girls as a focus for FFBS.

Ensuring that advocacy is a crosscutting technical area is integrated into other care impacts to scale pathways, especially Service Systems Strengthening and Social Accountability, Social Movements, Social Norms, and Impact at Scale.

Guiding Principles

At CARE, we believe that our advocacy must resonate with our core values, mission, and vision as an organization. This means that our advocacy approaches must be grounded in human rights and reflect our deep commitment to equality and social justice for all.

- We acknowledge that advocacy does not take place in a silo and requires engagement from all parts of CARE. We will work collaboratively and strategically with different talents and expertise, including with technical, communications, programming, fundraising, marketing, and MEAL teams, and specifically in ways that will support us in achieving our advocacy goals.
- In line with our organizational focus, we will seek to be women and girl-led, and/or advance gender transformative systems change through all our advocacy, in line with our organizational approach to Women’s Voice and Leadership.
- CARE specifically recognizes the central role of feminist activism in promoting gender equality, and the importance of feminist principles in enabling social justice more broadly. This entails that advocacy work to apply intersectional lens – i.e., understanding how different types of discrimination or oppression combine and compound- is critical to developing principled and effective advocacy to advance social and gender justice goals.
- We support efforts to elaborate and adopt a more decolonial approach across the aid sector – across resources, knowledge, influence, and power. We don’t have all the answers yet but will be guided by a spirit of respectful inquiry and enable non-judgmental open dialogue to advance anti-racism and decolonization.
- We will cede space & work to shift power – amplifying the priorities, creating space, and advocating in partnership with WROs/WLOs/CSOs, feminists, LGBTIQ+, and social movements representing communities in the Global South. We will be guided by CARE’s new approach to partnerships.

- Ensure Conflict Sensitivity (CS) to ensure that we understand the context in which the FFBS program is operating, and the interaction between its intervention and that context to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts of the program.

References / Guidance Documents

Please contact your global advocacy TA for additional up-to-date tools to address your local context.

Advocacy Main Tools

- [CARE International Advocacy Handbook](#)
- [Global Advocacy Roadmap 2022-2023](#)
- [Advocacy Capacity Assessment Tool](#)
- [Developing an advocacy strategy](#)
- [Lobbying Stakeholders and Effective Convening](#)
- [Advocacy Strategy Table](#)

Understanding Community & Institutional Power Dynamics

- [Putting Gender in Political Economy Analysis](#)
- [Political Economy Analysis](#)

Social Accountability

- [Community Score Card Toolkit](#)
- [Service Systems and Social Accountability \(4SA\)](#)
- [Social Audit Toolkit](#)

Advocacy Monitoring Tools

- [AIIR Tool](#)
- [Budget Monitoring Guidance](#)
- [Governance Marker Guidance](#)

Social Movements

- [Supporting Social Movements Guidance Note](#)
 - [Movement – Network Self-Assessment](#)
 - [Supporting the Women’s Movement and Collective Action](#)
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