# TRUSTED CONNECTIONS: CARE'S ANNUAL REPORT ON SAVINGS GROUPS 2026

## SAVINGS GROUPS ARE WHERE SHE STARTS. TRUSTED PARTNERS CONNECT HER TO THE SKILLS, MARKETS, AND FINANCE SHE NEEDS TO GROW.

### WHY SAVINGS GROUPS MATTER IN 2026

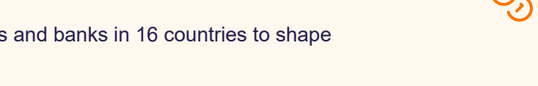
**3 in 4**
women in savings groups say crises are making it harder for them to earn a living.

**4 in 5**
say their greatest need is support to earn a living.

### HOW SAVINGS GROUPS HAVE GROWN IN 2026

**31 million**
members since 1991, including 1.8 million taking part in our current programs

**Halfway to our goal of supporting 62 million people to join savings groups by 2030.**




**67**
countries since 1991

**$1.8 billion**
saved in the past year

**For more than three decades, Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) have offered women a simple, community-owned way to save, borrow, and plan for the future.**

As crises around the world deepen, savings groups remain one of the few sources of support women can count on.

Groups do more than save and lend: they help women find new ways to earn, grow more food, recover from crisis, protect nature, and build businesses that strengthen local economies.

> "Community savings groups are a system women already trust, and CARE's reach within that system is what makes them a viable partner. Our job, working with our partners, is to get capital flowing and to put more money in their savings box."

**GERRY LANIGAN, SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER, FINCA INTERNATIONAL**

## REACHING MORE WOMEN

Members have built a support network, a safe place to save, and access to loans to get them through tough times and invest in their future. We work with others who are setting up and supporting new groups so more women can join.

### Local expertise

Communities are starting savings groups themselves. In Rwanda, more than 14,000 local trainers, known as Village Agents, now support 40,000 VSLAs to reach more than 1 million members.

### Partner organizations

In Syria, local partners are building a network of trainers in communities to support groups and start new ones to meet demand. Our online training course, built with TechChange, now reaches more partners in more languages.

### National support

In 2026, we partnered with governments and banks in 16 countries to shape policies that help savings groups grow.

### JOSSELYN, ECUADOR

A savings group helped Josselyn recover after drought devastated her farm. Now she's started 20 more groups, helping 400 people save, earn, and invest.

***"We can solve things for ourselves. We just need a little push to move forward."***

## DEEPENING IMPACT

As women aim higher, we're building the support and connections their businesses need to succeed.

### Support matched to her ambition

Targeted business advice, mentoring, and digital skills, at her own pace. In 2026, 81% of projects working with savings groups also challenged attitudes and stereotypes that hold women back.

### Visibility beyond her community

Turning her record of saving and repaying loans into data that banks, businesses, and governments can trust. Linking digital savings records with credit scorers and lenders, an approach built in Uganda and improved in Tanzania, is now expanding to Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

### Loans that work for her

New partners and loans designed around her life. In Sierra Leone, a partner lender saw a 98.7% repayment rate from savings group members.

### MARGUERITE, CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Loans from her savings group, then a bank, grew Marguerite's phone-credit business. Now it serves her community and helps keep her family's cocoa farm running.

***"I want to build a shop to set myself up properly… and also expand to sell SIM cards and phones."***

Read the full report: **care.org/vsla-annual-report**

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