A PLACE TO GROW
EMPOWERING WOMEN
IN CARE’S AGRICULTURE PROGRAMMING
SEPTEMBER 2009

WITH FUNDING FROM
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It has been quite a journey since we launched the “A Place to Grow” initiative in February 2008 with funding from the Howard G. Buffett Foundation. Its purpose is to elevate the issue of gender equality and women’s empowerment on CARE’s agriculture and value chain development agendas. I am personally committed to this exciting endeavor and have managed it because I have witnessed gender inequities firsthand in my family, the workplace and across CARE’s countries of operation.

Gender inequality is one of the underlying causes of poverty, as it inhibits just and equitable development for all. Empowering women helps to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable development that is owned by the people themselves. While there are other equally important actions to undertake, especially around governance, enabling environments and human capacity, I am proud to be part of an organization that has taken a bold step to put women’s empowerment and gender equality at the core of all its programming.

The agriculture sector engages over 96% of the working population in developing countries. Yet here in the 21st century, poverty remains rampant and malnutrition is a sad reality in areas where food is scarce despite vast potential. Women and girls represent over 75% of the agriculture labor force, working in their husbands’ and parents’ fields, fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking food for the households, and raising children. They give extensively of their knowledge, skills, labor and time yet reap fewer benefits than men. Their contributions are often ignored or under-valued in their households, communities, and at the national planning level. Moreover, women’s right to own or make decisions about productive assets such as land are too often denied. Agricultural development strategies cannot continue to ignore gender inequality.

Governments and bilateral and multilateral donors are putting agriculture back on the front line to fight food insecurity and malnutrition and boost economic growth. Investment in this sector is increasing especially in Africa, which many feel was bypassed by the “Green Revolution” that took place a generation ago in Asia and Latin America. With the current global financial crisis, changing climate, and depleted and scarce natural resources, we need to think strategically about the kind of green revolution we want for this generation and the next to come. The poor and hungry deserve a human-oriented and environmentally friendly revolution, one that recognizes the full potential of women and girls as human beings with rights and as key contributors to sustainable agriculture and economic growth.

To achieve such change, we need appropriate gender-sensitive policies that are translated into action with appropriate budget allocations and monitoring and evaluation systems. We need appropriate technologies adapted to the needs and realities of both women and men. We need equitable market forces that provide opportunities for both women and men. We must challenge and change social norms that maintain an inequitable status quo. We need to help local and traditional male authorities recognize their mothers, wives, sisters and daughters as equal citizens and transform customs and practices that privilege men over women, boys over girls.

As a development agency, we at CARE must hold ourselves accountable and raise our voices to say “Enough!” to social injustice that impedes smooth and sustainable agricultural development. For this to happen, we must demonstrate a bold commitment to engage men in our processes and forge strategic alliances to support women’s own movements.

We are grateful for our supporters and donors, but they can and must do more. Short-term funding and anything less than full engagement will not bring about a revolution. As a colleague observed in Ghana, “Social change is time-consuming.” It is a long-term investment. We plead for their patience — and surely this Place will grow and continue to grow bigger — and women, girls, men and boys in developing countries will reap the fruits. One day!

I am sure you will find what we have learned during the last 18 months useful. This briefing provides an overview of the Women Empowerment in Agriculture (WEA) Framework we used to review our agriculture portfolio in Africa and Latin America, some highlights from programs in Ghana, Uganda, Mozambique, Burundi and Central America, Insights from CARE’s colleagues and program participants, innovative tools and approaches, and recommendations on how to achieve gender equity and women’s empowerment in CARE’s future work in agriculture production and access to markets.

My CARE colleagues and I are grateful to the Howard G. Buffett Foundation for the opportunity to implement this research and capacity-building initiative. I also thank the lead consultant, Catherine Hill, whose passion, creativity, and commitment have made her a true “CARE champion”. My gratitude extends to colleagues and consultants in Africa, Latin America and Asia, as well CARE Headquarters, who have helped make this initiative such a great success. This is just the beginning of a long journey for equity and women’s empowerment in agriculture and other related sectors, and your continuous support is much appreciated.

September 2009
Laté Lawson-Lartego
Director, Economic Development Unit
Sustainable Livelihood Cluster
CARE USA
AN OVERVIEW OF THE A PLACE TO GROW INITIATIVE

“"One of the biggest problems facing programs is the focus on quick results. Time is needed; gender is not tangible. In three years, we just start the conversation.”
- From a CARE Ghana gender workshop, 2007

Despite the fact that women play a huge role in agriculture all over the developing world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, they earn less than men, have less control over what they produce, and face barriers at every point in the agricultural system, including production, processing and marketing. With the increasing shift from subsistence to cash crops, that gap will keep widening if women do not have equal access to new technologies and markets. Meanwhile, climate change, HIV and AIDS, migration and civil strife/conflict are increasing women’s burden in all aspects of food production.

The Howard G. Buffett Foundation generously funded an 18-month initiative called “A Place to Grow,” which enabled CARE to take a deep look at our agriculture portfolio. During 2007-2009, CARE implemented 383 agriculture projects in 52 countries. Project topics included conservation agriculture, livestock, aquaculture, horticulture, urban/peri-urban agriculture, irrigation, natural resources management and agriculture economic components. During this time, CARE’s agriculture work reached about 10 million households. We then looked closely at country programs in Mozambique, Ghana, Uganda, and Honduras.

We found that the agriculture projects with the greatest impact on women’s empowerment had gender-focused goals and objectives, disaggregation of target population data by sex, gender-sensitive indicators, and a gendered power analysis (though not necessarily in the form of a comprehensive “appreciative inquiry”). These important elements were usually included because of gender “champions” in the project, country office. CARE’s international offices and/or donors. However, very few projects had operational definitions of gender equality or women-developed definitions of empowerment, nor was there an attempt to involve future participants directly in the project planning and design.

What we learned from A Place to Grow will help ensure that issues of women’s empowerment are built into all CARE agriculture-related programs. An important part of this ongoing process will be sharing our successes and our challenges across CARE and with our partners. In that spirit, this short briefing offers best practices and lessons learned from programs and projects in CARE’s agriculture portfolio.

We first provide a brief summary of how we conceptualized women’s empowerment in agriculture for the initiative. Then we present several case studies. The first three show how some projects have addressed a number of dimensions under the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture (WEA) Framework to plan, implement and assess the impact of integrated programming. We then focus on some innovative gender-sensitivity tools and approaches developed by country programs and shared during our Circles of Learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM A PLACE TO GROW

- Consider gender from the beginning.
There is great value in actively engaging project participants—both women and men—in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of agricultural projects, particularly in undertaking a gendered power analysis.
- Gender is not just an add-on.
Projects are more likely to empower women if they incorporate specific high-level project goals or objectives focused on gender equality, rather than merely in lower-level project activities.
- Defining empowerment.
Women should be involved in defining their own perspectives and measurements of empowerment. This may also open up different definitions of empowerment.
- Knowledge sharing.
Documentation of gender equality approaches should be included in project design, along with the resources to follow through. Staff should report on both the positive and not-so-positive results in order to promote learning and improve future project design.
- Budgeting for gender.
Gender factors can only be addressed meaningfully if staff time and resources are in place to do so. Sensitizing donors and partners to the need for longer-term commitments is essential to make meaningful progress.
- Continuous learning.
Gender must be part of developing learning agendas and capacity building with staff and partners at all levels of the development continuum—from field-based workers to high-level management.
Improvements in the Enabling Environment

Improvements in Social Positions

Improvements in Human Conditions

where CARE should work:

...impact upon whole communities.

...and because of their potential to have an

...most from power imbalances and poverty,

...women and girls because they suffer the

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...inequality, poor governance, and

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...poverty, we must address the underlying

...order to have sustainable impact upon

...CARE’s Theory of Change says that in

...in all of our programming.

(SII) into how we measure women’s empowerment

Strategic Impact Inquiry on Women’s Empowerment

Unifying Framework, and research conducted under a

work, including our Global Theory of Change, our

Framework. This framework built on a number of

conceptual underpinnings already guiding CARE’s

work, including our Global Theory of Change, our

Unifying Framework, and research conducted under a

Strategic Impact Inquiry on Women’s Empowerment

(SII) into how we measure women’s empowerment

in all of our programming.

CARE’s Theory of Change says that in

order to have sustainable impact upon poverty,

we must address the underlying causes of poverty, which include gender

inequality, poor governance, and discrimination and social/economic

exclusion. Furthermore, we should focus on women and girls because they suffer the

most from power imbalances and poverty, and because of their potential to have an

impact upon whole communities.

Our Unifying Framework lays out three broad areas

where CARE should work:

• Improvements in Human Conditions

• Improvements in Social Positions

• Improvements in the Enabling Environment

Adapted from CARE’s framework used under the Strategic Impact Inquiry (SII) specifically to the agriculture context, the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture (WEA) Framework shows how and where power and inequalities shape the flow of resources and opportunities for women. It says that in order to have a sustainable impact, CARE must work across three dimensions of empowerment:

• AGENCY: This refers to women’s ability to carry out their own analyses, make their own decisions, and take their own actions.

• STRUCTURE: This encompasses everything that surrounds women and determines what is normal, acceptable and legitimate in their lives. Examples include kinship, economic markets, religion, castes and other social hierarchies, educational systems, organizational and political cultures, and ownership or control of resources.

• RELATIONSHIPS: Empowerment often results when individual women build relationships, joint efforts, coalitions, and mutual support.

Under these three dimensions, 23 sub-dimensions define various ways to begin improving opportunities for women (see page 9).

An initial outcome of A Place to Grow was the recognition that the five Levers of Change for agriculture could not be addressed in isolation. There had to be a more holistic approach that incorporated additional factors such as:

• Internalization and translation of conventions and agreements promoting women’s empowerment and gender equality into action.

• Program and organizational goals and objectives that prioritize women’s empowerment, alongside more traditional agriculture outcomes.

• Donor and organizational commitment to longer periods of engagement (10-15 years).

• Indicators of women’s empowerment in agriculture developed with the women and girls themselves.

• Men’s involvement in the process of women’s empowerment.

• Ongoing, long-term dialogue and analysis on power dynamics and gender inequality with women and men in communities and with partners.

Some of the case studies to follow illustrate how these conceptual underpinnings have been used in project planning and impact assessments.
### Dimensions and Sub-dimensions of Women’s Empowerment, as Applied Under the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Sub-dimensions</th>
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| **Agency** | Self-image and self esteem  
Awareness of human and legal rights  
Access to information and skills  
Access to formal and informal education  
Employment and control of own labor  
Mobility in public  
Decision influence in household  
Group membership & activism  
Material assets owned and/or controlled  
Body health & bodily integrity |
| **Structure** | Marriage and kinship rules, norms, processes  
Laws and practices of citizenship  
Information and access to services  
Access to justice (enforceability of rights)  
Market accessibility  
Political representation  
Budgeting practices at different levels  
Civil society representation |
| **Relations** | Consciousness of self and others as interdependent  
Negotiation & accommodation habits  
Alliance & coalition habits  
Pursuit & acceptance of accountability  
New social forms |


Just as a three-legged stool falls over if one leg is weak, the approach to addressing women’s empowerment and gender equality in the context of agriculture is weakened without the presence of “three strong legs.” i.e., project strategies that address agency, structure, and relations in tandem.

Women in Northern Uganda primarily produce food for subsistence and local markets, but both men and women have begun growing sesame as a cash crop. However, women face persistent barriers regarding equal access to land, capital, agriculture inputs, and links to markets compared with men, even though they often shoulder the larger workload. While women’s right to own land is safeguarded by national law, in rural communities customary law takes precedence and ties a woman’s right to access and own land to her relationship with her husband.

This case study illustrates how impact on empowerment of women in the context of agriculture can be assessed using the lens of Agency, Structure and Relations.

When the Agricultural Marketing Initiative (AMI) was set up to help Ugandan sesame farmers engage in collective marketing, it recognized the negative gender imbalances embedded in the sesame industry and in response incorporated a specific gender objective to promote women’s participation in household and community-level decision-making.

AMI’s approach to women’s empowerment had two aspects:
1. Training about men and women’s roles in agricultural work and the importance of sharing farming tasks, joint decision-making within households, and female leadership in farmer groups.
2. Encouraging women’s membership in new and existing farmer groups and taking on leadership roles.

A PLACE TO GROW

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN CARE’S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

Agricultural Marketing Initiative (AMI) Uganda

“A Place to Grow. Lessons for Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality. Conservation Agriculture in the Northern Region of Ghana

CASE STUDIES FROM THE FIELD

- Sharing the harvest:

- A Place to Grow, Lessons for Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality.
In March 2009, a team from George Washington University collaborated with CARE to assess the project’s impact on women in terms of their ability to exercise decision-making power at the household level and to control income earned from commercial sale of sesame. The evaluation interpreted the results through the lens of agency, structure, and relations, and related sub-dimensions:

**AGENCY**
- **Self-esteem:** Women said the training they received on improved sesame farming practices had strengthened their sense of self-efficacy and self-image. Men expressed appreciation of women’s capacity to obtain higher yields.
- **Household decision-making:** The overwhelming majority of women reported they had greater influence in household decision-making, since men now saw that consultation was beneficial for the whole family. Women’s access to land had also improved slightly, since men felt less need to maintain complete control.
- **Group membership and activism:** Men were more supportive of women’s participation in farmer groups once they realized that improved agronomic skills led to higher income. However, a few men still felt it reduced their wives’ available time for family. Women’s access to land had also improved slightly, since men felt less need to maintain complete control.

**RELATIONS**
- **New social forms:** A few women indicated that farmers’ groups were listening more to their views and opinions, especially in cases where members had received gender training. There were also reports that some men had begun to help their wives with sesame farming, even weeding - a traditionally female task.

**STRUCTURE**

The project did not address any of the deeply embedded structural issues underlying gender inequalities in Uganda, such as customs and traditions that restrict women’s ability to access, control and inherit land. Overall, the strategy for promoting women’s empowerment was limited to promoting group membership and household decision-making power with no intent to change structural inequalities or to promote relationships that would help empower women.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**
- Develop more holistic approaches to women’s empowerment and gender equality in the design phase, i.e., address all three dimensions: agency, structure and relations.
- Formulate a balanced set of gender-sensitive objectives and indicators, identified in a participatory manner.
- Build the capacity of CARE and partner staff to pursue women’s empowerment and gender equality, and establish incentives and accountability mechanisms to encourage greater emphasis on women’s empowerment in projects.

**RESOURCE PICTURE CARDS**

The purpose of this activity is to determine how important resources are used and controlled within a household. Men and women are divided into separate groups and cards with pictures of locally relevant resources of value are shown to everyone. Next, participants are given blank cards and markers and asked to draw any additional important resources. Then they place each card under one of three large images: a woman, a man, or a woman and a man together, according to who in the household uses it. This is followed by an in-depth discussion about why they placed cards where they did, and what it says about gendered allocation of resources. The exercise is repeated to determine how decisions are made about use, purchase and sale of household resources. (AMI, Uganda)

A strong programmatic approach led by a committed champion or champions of women’s empowerment can ensure that gender-sensitive approaches are included in all agriculture and natural resource interventions.

The Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Program represents about 60 percent of CARE Ghana’s portfolio. Its goal is to reduce poverty by promoting sustainable livelihoods for poor and marginalized rural families who depend primarily upon natural resources.

The program consists of a number of inter-linked components (rather than isolated projects) that create synergies to address the underlying causes of poverty in a holistic manner. Gender is meant to cut across all components.

CARE Ghana has strong ANR leadership committed to ensuring continuous strengthening of its impact on gender equality and women’s empowerment. This creates willingness and flexibility among partners, donors and stakeholders to dialogue with community leaders and include women specifically in all programming.

Women account for about 70 percent of total food production and marketing in Ghana, making them central to food security and economic development. However, women’s empowerment and gender equity are constrained by their lack of access, ownership, and decision-making power related to land, participation and representation in agriculture and natural resource groups, and influence on intra-household decision-making.

Women’s contributions are often overlooked or ignored by husbands, fathers, brothers and sons, as well as community leaders, extension workers, agricultural planners and policy makers.

**CASE STUDIES FROM THE FIELD**

"When you seek to empower women, you need to look at ways to change relationships between women and men.”
- Circle of Learning, Tamale, Northern Ghana

"Upon being asked why they had left a better meeting venue to the women, one of the men answered that it was “an act of respect for women since we had come to realize that women carry more responsibilities and thus deserve the best in life.”
- Conservation Agriculture Project Case Study – Northern Ghana
Because of these champions, each individual component defined specific and appropriate gender approaches. For example, the Conservation Agriculture Project (CAP) developed practical and appropriate technologies for women and addressed their need for access to land. The Community Initiatives for Food Security (CIFS) component addressed women’s empowerment by:

- Recognizing the need to address power inequalities along gender, ethnic and other lines
- Creating opportunities and environments for men to network and dialogue about gender issues and generate new ideas for action
- Improving capacities on gender analysis and gender-disaggregated data
- Involving men and women in project design
- Developing gender-sensitive indicators that go beyond “numbers” to address such issues as gender discrimination.

A real strength of the ANR program is its commitment to including men in community discussions on women’s security of land tenure, income generation and expenditures, and community mapping and action planning. This encourages men to support women and equitable decision-making at the household and community levels.

A workshop held in 2007 and led by two strong champions of gender-sensitive programming helped CARE staff and partners in several broad areas, including:

- Reaching a common understanding of key gender principles, definitions and tools for addressing gender equality
- Collecting and using sex-disaggregated data and information
- Undertaking gender-sensitive analysis to inform planning and implementation
- Deriving goals, objectives and activities from gender-based analysis
- Implementing and monitoring projects from a gender perspective
- Sharing experiences in using gender-sensitive approaches in project and program planning
- Applying gender to already existing plans

Under the ANR program, a number of new program approaches and tools have been developed, including the Participatory Technology Development (PTD) processes applied under the Conservation Agriculture Project, and Community Institutional Mapping (CIM) used by the Land Tenure (SLATE) and Community Food Security (CIFS) components. Successful tools and methodologies for women’s empowerment are shared and mainstreamed across all components. A Learning and Innovation position supports continuous development of the ANR gender strategy.

Overall, there have been positive changes for women and girls involved in ANR program initiatives. These include benefiting from access to new technologies, growing recognition of the importance of women’s land tenure security, land reallocation and improved access for women within households, and improved support from husbands in farming activities and child rearing. It remains to be seen how women and girls will benefit in the long term, but the key elements for success are in place.

“After one woman stood up to say how happy the women were about their involvement in the project, a man felt obligated to say he thought the women had in fact had far too much say in the selection of the project. He was shouted down by both the men and women.”

Community Initiatives for Food Security (CIFS)
Mid-term Review, July 2007

In the final analysis, both the man, his wives and children have to rely on the yield from the man’s farm, when they could have benefited also from the woman’s farm had she had access to good land and other resources to produce on equal terms. It is therefore not surprising that most rural families do not have enough food to last them all year round and have to cope in other ways.”

- Circle of Learning, Tamale, Ghana

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- Circle of Learning, Tamale, Ghana

Customary land tenure arrangements in Ghana are complex, based on traditions of ethnic groups and clans who acquired their land through war and assimilation. Landless farmers can lease land for share-cropping, but there are rarely any written agreements or boundary demarcations of these transactions. They also exclude many farmers, especially women, which limits agricultural production and increases poverty among those who depend on land to make a living.

A national Land Policy was established 15 years ago, implemented by a Land Administration Program with support from the World Bank. While this appears to guarantee equal rights to both men and women, in reality women depend on their husbands or families for access to land, the quality of land they are given is often inferior, and security of land use is not necessarily assured. This is partly due to fear that traditional family holdings would be lost through marriage or inheritance if women gained control.

“After one woman stood up to say how happy the women were about their involvement in the project, a man felt obligated to say he thought the women had in fact had far too much say in the selection of the project. He was shouted down by both the men and women.”

Community Initiatives for Food Security (CIFS)
Mid-term Review, July 2007
A Place to Grow and the Circles of Learning related to that review highlighted one of the biggest challenges faced by staff and partners - addressing women’s land tenure rights. SLATE provides a good example of what one CARE initiative did to try to change land policy structures that impede women farmers and build new relationships that would empower them to access their right to land.

The Security of Land Tenure Component under CARE Ghana’s Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Program sought to address one of the root causes of poverty in rural areas – the lack of access to and control of land for agricultural purposes. The key beneficiaries of SLATE were poor landless farmers, farmers with no tenure security, and women dependent on agriculture and natural resources for their livelihoods.

SLATE incorporated gender through the structural and relational aspects of women’s empowerment, undertaking a comprehensive analysis of women’s land tenure security rights. The results supported and informed the following strategies:

1. Raising awareness of rural land users around the government’s Land Policy and the Land Administration Program supported by the World Bank.
2. Strengthening civil society’s voice to influence the Land Administration Program in favor of greater security of tenure for rural farmers, especially women.
3. Facilitating dialogue between traditional authorities and women land-users, building the capacity of women’s groups to play a more active role in decision-making processes of the Land Administration Program.
4. Working with traditional power holders to change attitudes and promote dialogue with women land-users.
5. Influencing national policy to create a more enabling environment for women’s empowerment.
6. Strengthening women’s coalitions and networks to address women’s role in the governance of land.
7. Representing the interests of civil society and women’s issues on the Drafting Committee of Ghana’s new Land Code.

Various gender approaches were implemented, such as disaggregation of data by sex, separate discussions with women and men, and mechanisms to promote women’s active participation, such as providing child care for breastfeeding mothers and those with small children.

By the end of the project, many women felt more empowered to negotiate with men over land. Many had increased their access to land and security of tenure, including land that was previously regarded as an exclusive preserve of men. In cases where husbands had insufficient land, some were supporting their wives efforts to acquire land elsewhere.

Men were beginning to realize that women’s empowerment or improved economic status would not undermine their authority in the home, which had been one of the arguments for denying women access to land and security of tenure. They now appreciate how much the wife contributes to household income and other domestic commitments, such as payment of children’s school fees.

SLATE’s experiences and approaches are now mainstreamed across the ANR program.

CIRCLES OF LEARNING: SHARING EXPERIENCES AND INNOVATION ON WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY IN AGRICULTURE

The task of addressing gender equality in the context of agriculture projects often falls to technical staff that generally do not have experience in taking on social issues. The Circles of Learning described here are just the beginning to a continual process of capacity building through sharing of knowledge, skills and innovation among CARE colleagues who are committed to empower women and reduce inequality in the context of agriculture.

A Place to Grow revealed the learning needs of CARE agricultural staff and partners, as well as a wealth of untapped and often undocumented experience and creativity regarding empowering women in agriculture. CARE has already held three Circles of Learning on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture, in Uganda, Ghana and Mozambique. The first one brought together ‘champions’ for women’s empowerment from CARE agriculture projects in Angola, Burundi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. They all committed to sharing the lessons, approaches, and tools from the workshop with their country office colleagues. Representatives of organizations from outside CARE also participated.

The aim of each Circle of Learning was to build practical skills for analysis and action using participants’ own work experiences. Through games, visualization and observation, brainstorming, group and pair work, case studies, role plays, and plenary discussions, they shared ideas and innovative ways of addressing gender equality and women’s empowerment in the context of agriculture. Participants explored several quantitative and qualitative assessment tools and applied them to their own contexts.

CASE STUDIES FROM THE FIELD

Tools for field-based analysis, monitoring and evaluation as shared at the Uganda Circle of Learning
- WEA Framework as applied to projects
- Resource picture cards (AMU case study)
- Income expenditure tool (SEED, Mozambique)
- Visualizing women’s empowerment (CARE Burundi)
- Spider web tool (CARE Gender Equity Building Block)
- Circles of Influence (CARE Gender Equity Building Block)
- Gender analysis matrix (HIBRET, Ethiopia)
- Community Institutional mapping – CI (FASE, Ghana)
- Land allocation tool (Mali)
- Women’s leadership case study
- Organizational strategies (e.g., Agriculture, Value Chain strategies)

The following tools and resources from the Circles of Learning are included in Hill, Catherine, A collection of promising practices and ideas for action for addressing women’s empowerment and gender equality in CARE’s agriculture portfolio. CARE 2009.
1. Promising practices and ideas for action: Overview
2. About the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture (WEA) Framework
3. Applying the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture (WEA) Framework
4. Undertaking gender analysis
5. Towards measuring impacts: Strengthening design and M&E
6. Strengthening learning processes, skills, and action
7. What about men? Working with men for women’s empowerment and gender equality

I used to think gender was just about balancing the number of males and females. I thought that rigid household chores were ordained by God. I thought gender was about men playing the roles of women. I thought gender was a foreign agenda being pushed on us by the West. I assumed that formally educated men were all gender sensitive.  
- from a CARE Ghana gender workshop, 2007

A PLACE TO GROW EMPOWERING WOMEN IN LAND TENURE SECURITY
If basic understanding of the concepts of gender equality and women's empowerment was low, participatory learning exercises helped illuminate the "socialization" processes that lead to gender inequalities.

There was particular interest in learning how to collect, analyze, and use sex-disaggregated data. In the Ghana and Mozambique Circles of Learning, participants explored a typical baseline survey questionnaire to discuss how well it captured who does what or is affected by what and why in relation to agricultural livelihoods. They identified which aspects were related to women's empowerment and gender equality, and where those who designed the questionnaire may have inserted their own biases. Participants then suggested improvements to capture the differing priorities and problems of men and women around agricultural production, income, food security, physical assets, and farming systems and technologies. Finally, they drew up a list of items to consider in developing "gender-sensitive surveys" and "gender-sensitive indicators." They also developed draft program-level indicators which were to be refined after the Circles by relevant staff and management (see box).

Three tools for qualitative data collection and analysis were introduced and participants practiced using them:
1. Income Expenditure Tree (SEED, Mozambique)
2. Visualizing Women's Empowerment (CARE Burundi)
3. Resource picture cards (AMI, Uganda)

Participants identified and discussed scenarios that commonly arise during field observations, such as men interrupting or observing women's group discussions without being invited. Topics for future Circles of Learning might include:
1. Strengthening capacity for developing and adopting monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and tools.
2. Processes for helping women and men identify their own concepts of women's empowerment and gender equality.
3. Applying/adapting the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture (WEA) framework to different value chains.

4. Bringing about structural change in relation to kinship, caste, religion, social hierarchies, markets and trade, and judicial and political systems.
5. Supporting women's leadership at higher levels in agriculture projects.
7. Incorporating culture into gender approaches, where norms and traditions often prevent the empowerment of women.
8. How to address gender equality and women's empowerment in ongoing initiatives.

GENDER-SENSITIVE INDICATORS

The following indicators were developed at the Ghana Circle of Learning. These were then taken back to the program level for further refinement.

1. POLICY
   - # of gender-sensitive policies that reflect the interest of women at various levels
   - # of women's issues that are fully recognized and addressed at the community level

2. REPRESENTATION/PARTICIPATION
   - # of women influencing decision-making at all levels
   - # of women actively participating in decision-making at all levels

3. ASSET/RESOURCE ACCESS AND CONTROL
   - % of smallholder women and men farmers with secured livelihoods
   - # of women and men who have access, ownership, and control over productive resources
   - % of women and men, boys and girls, with secure equitable access to and benefits of agricultural resources
   - % of women with access to and control of productive resources, such as land
   - # of assets required by men and women (physical and financial)

SUSTAINABLE AND EFFECTIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (SEED) MOZAMBIQUE

"We won’t achieve our objective if we don’t address gender and HIV and AIDS." - SEED Project Manager

To understand and respond to the needs of individuals within households, SEED project staff undertook a detailed baseline study, which had the following innovative elements:
- The identification and inclusion of different categories of "vulnerability". For example, female-headed households were specifically identified as households in which the respondents identify women as the household head and households in which the husband is declared to be away from home for more than six months in a year.
- A well-designed quantitative “client intake” survey that was sensitive to gender and captured current demographic, social, and economic conditions of women and men at the household and community levels. A sample of participants has been interviewed again every year and their information updated.
- An interactive qualitative tool (see page 19) developed by SEED to monitor change in men’s and women’s decision-making processes around household income and expenditures.
- A PLACE TO GROW

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN CARE’S AGRICULTURE PROGRAMMING

CASE STUDIES FROM THE FIELD

A PLACE TO GROW

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN CARE’S AGRICULTURE PROGRAMMING

1. Creating more economic opportunities for women by increasing the participation of female beneficiaries.
2. Ensuring project benefits for all members of the family through fair decision-making.

Using the detailed baseline information gathered previously, SEED was able to disaggregate its indicators by sex to compare the potentially different experiences of men and women over the life of the project. They now measure the number of trained persons, use of services, adoption rates, sales and access to markets according to sex. They can also analyze increases in income, household socio-economic security and resilience through a gender lens.
To establish a baseline and monitor change, SEED introduced the use of a participatory tool called the Income Expenditure Tree (IET), to work with men and women on analyzing their income sources and expenditures. Project facilitators had individuals in households design a tree using pieces of cardboard. They then used drawings to depict the roots, leaves, stems, father, mother, food, children, money, etc. The roots and branches symbolized the household’s income streams and expenditure, respectively, while the tree trunk represented household decision-making.

The IET has been used to track progress in women’s and men’s income generation and expenditure patterns. It has proved an effective tool for exploring and discussing intra-household decision-making with men and women.

The concept of empowerment is a new one in Burundi. In fact, its meaning varies greatly depending on time, place and gender. The standard empowerment indicators CARE uses are not always applicable. Therefore as part of the design process of UMWIZERO (A Positive Future for Women in Burundi), CARE took time to gather qualitative information that would lead to a more common and useful understanding of empowerment based on men and women’s perspectives. This helped establish a baseline and defined indicators of behavior change.

It is crucial to move beyond using “input” indicators (% of women participating in an activity) and “output” indicators (% of women adopting a particular technology) as proxies for measuring impacts that substantially improve women’s and girls’ lives.”

- Olima Wo Suka Case Study, Mozambique

The challenge of measuring women’s empowerment was identified through A Place to Grow reviews and the Circles of Learning. CARE staff generally can work magic with agricultural indicators around productivity, yields, and markets, but find it hard to develop and apply social indicators. Since there is pressure from donors to show results, projects tend to use quantitative indicators of gendered components, such as “numbers of women and men involved in training”. UMWIZERO, though not an agriculture project, illustrates the importance of working with women (and men) to identify their own perspectives of empowerment and develop and monitor locally-relevant indicators.

Specific indicators track developments towards gender equality:

- Number of women participating in project activities
- % of households where women are involved in household decision making
- % of males who can name two benefits of female participation in decision-making for economic activities.

The participatory process included:

- Separate men’s and women’s focus groups in each of the intervention areas.
- Individual interviews with future women beneficiaries of UMWIZERO.
- Statistical analysis of women’s responses, leading to specific indicators.
The focus groups helped researchers to identify eight domains (outlined below) of every-day life where they thought changes must take place and how they visualized women’s empowerment.

1. Marital stability: women can claim access to the same advantages as their husbands and protect themselves if their spouses break the law.

2. Women’s increased income: women’s contribution to household income and capacity to acquire resources without relying on her husband.

3. Participation in managing household goods: women and men as partners in joint management of household assets.

4. Women’s participation in community decision-making structures: women want to be included in the administrative structures to which men are elected and which delegate power to other community groups.

5. Gender-based violence: supporting women’s efforts to address their silence for fear of further marginalization within society, addressing domestic and community violence including structures and systems that “men’s entitlement to beat women.”

6. Sexuality and reproductive health: structures and norms that keep women from talking about sex with their husbands and limit women’s access to reproductive health and HIV and AIDS services and information.

7. Access to information: making more effective use of women’s information sources and improving their access to radio, political meetings, technical training and health centers.

8. Individual leadership: women’s capacity to approach and surmount political, social and cultural barriers.

After the focus groups, 398 women were organized under five categories: young women married less than 5 years, women married 10 to 20 years, women married 20 to 25 years, widows, and Batwa women or hunter-gatherers. Then they were interviewed extensively about what an empowered woman would look like in a number of areas under each domain described above. Enough detailed information was gathered to outline five levels of empowerment under each of the resulting indicators – from (1) no empowerment to (5) complete empowerment, with stages of evolution in between.

An example of indicators under domain #3, Participation in managing household goods was:

1. Women who do not exercise any control over household resources
2. Women who exercise control over certain resources with their husband’s permission
3. Women who exercise control over a part of the household resources
4. Women who exercise control over all the household resources
5. Women who, in partnership with their husbands, exercise control over household resources

Indicators of #4, Women’s participation in community decision-making structures were:

1. Women do not feel interested in meetings
2. Women go to meetings without actively participating (do not give their opinions, are just on-lookers)
3. Women give their ideas to others before the meeting because they do not have the time to participate in community meetings
4. Women tell their ideas to others, but do not speak during the meetings
5. Women propose ideas and take responsibility in groups

This exercise led to an adjustment of UMWIZER’s logical framework and integration of new activities to address the largest obstacles to women’s empowerment, including:

1. Sensitizing men in good management and control of household goods.
2. Sensitizing stakeholders in how to treat human rights violations.
3. A study of why women are so attached to traditions and customs that oppress them.
4. A study on how to lighten women’s workload.
5. Integration of physical hygiene into program activities.

“ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE”

A tool shared from outside CARE

This tool was developed in India to help village women develop a plan to advance women’s rights and gender equality. It is similar to the tool used by CARE Burundi to define women’s own indicators of empowerment.

“We start by asking each person in the group to draw a large circle on a piece of paper. This circle is the world. Inside the circle, each person draws pictures of situations that reflect gender inequality. Drawing pictures forces people to think in real terms rather than abstractions. Then groups of four of five people sit together and draw a composite picture of the three most important markers of gender inequality. The results are put up on a wall, explained, and discussed until a rough consensus emerges.

Now everyone works together to draw another huge circle, inside which they draw pictures showing what each situation would look like if gender equality became a reality. Then the group discusses strategies to move from the first picture to the second picture. The next step is to work out how to track change – to answer the question “How will we know that change is really happening and happening in the right way?”

In the first round, one woman drew little girls working in the cotton fields outside a school full of little boys. Another drew a man beating his wife and a woman begging for work from the landlord. Yet another drew a weeping young girl brought to an old man and a line of men with money in their hands standing outside a liquor shop. The second round of pictures showed girls going to school while men and women worked in the cotton fields with smiling faces, a woman yoking a pair of bullocks to a plough, a group of women repairing a hand pump, an old couple blessing their daughter who stands before them holding hands with a young man, and a man doing the housework while his wife attends a meeting at the panchayat hall.”

Not every man thinks this way, we need training. The other day I mopped, I went to the mill to grind the corn and I disposed of the garbage. I don't do it well, but I'm learning even if I don't like it.

- Francisco, Honduras

By prioritizing women and girls, we have aligned our program strategy with the CARE Strategic Plan and are advancing the process of transition from projects to programs.

- Patricia Ahern, CARE Central America Program Quality Director

One of the things CARE Central America learned from A Place to Grow was that they needed to target women and girls specifically in all their agriculture and related interventions, in order to address the underlying causes of poverty in the region.

The CARE Central America regional office is transitioning from projects to programs, with a mandate to integrate its sectors, including agriculture and natural resources, to achieve a more holistic and sustainable transitioning from projects to programs, with a mandate to address the underlying causes of poverty in the region.

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In looking ahead to the next few years, CARE Central America has determined to focus on impact populations rather than sectors. A participatory process, including interviews with beneficiaries of previous ANR-related programs, was used to answer these key questions:

- What is the profound change needed in our society in order for CARE to impact the underlying causes of poverty in the region?
- Who should be our priority population in order to reach the change we seek?
- Who should be our strategic allies in promoting the change we seek?

The criteria for selection of impact populations began with the five root causes of poverty identified for Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador):

1. National development models that do not include the poor.
2. Policies that support women are non-existent, inadequately, implemented, implemented incorrectly, and/or poorly managed.
3. Poor government response to the most marginalized groups, due to corruption and weak judicial legal systems, management capacity, and civil service.
4. Weak citizen participation in decision-making processes.
5. High levels of discrimination around gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, sexual orientation, migration and residence.

Other criteria included:

- Alignment with CARE-USA's Strategic Plan and its Signature Programs

CARE Central America has therefore been working to build a more enabling environment for women and girls, using the following strategies:

- Advocacy for changing or applying public policy at all levels, by strengthening the voice of civil society
- Supporting the efforts of social movements to address the underlying causes of poverty, fight discrimination, and empower excluded groups
- Influencing attitudes and mobilizing support from the most privileged segments of society regarding poverty and social injustice.

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- CARE–Central America's programmatic strengths
- Potential contribution to key Millennium Development Goals
- CARE’s Theory of Change and strategic roles in the region
- Perceived degree of vulnerability
- Donor priorities for the region.

Ultimately CARE Central America chose to target the following three populations with integrated, multi-sectoral interventions, for the greatest impact on poverty reduction and women's empowerment.

- Working children, especially girls: This is one of the most vulnerable groups in the region, and among those who suffer the greatest neglect of basic rights, including access to education. Girls are more vulnerable than boys, but they also have the potential to be a force of change in their communities.
- Women heads of households: This group was selected because of the high percentage of all poor households that they represent. The proportion of women who are heads of households increased from 27% in 1990 to 36% in 2005 and a single female-headed household is much more likely to be poor than an integrated nuclear family household. These households are also more vulnerable to external shocks than integrated ones. There are significant overlaps between this population and working children, since a child from a poor female-headed household is more likely to have to work to supplement household income or to care for younger siblings so the mother can work.
- Rural farmers engaged in small-scale subsistence agriculture. In addition to representing a very high percentage of the poorest households in the region, this group was chosen because of their high degree of vulnerability to external shocks, climate change, and other events, such as the negotiation of free-trade agreements. They are important to ensuring the food security in the region and are linked to the working children population, since children from very poor households are likely to engage in child labor at some point.

There is great overlap among these three groups and the potential for good programmatic synergies. By getting away from projects and isolated sectors, there is a greater ability to design, implement and assess programs using a women's empowerment framework, especially in the context of agriculture and natural resources.
A Place to Grow is just one point in a long continuing journey. We have tried in this briefing to highlight our successes and share some good practices without ignoring the opportunities we have missed. We know we need to work harder to engage men, find ways to encourage longer-term commitments from donors under programmatic approaches, and develop systems and capacities for gender-sensitive impact measurement. Within the CARE organization itself, we can do more to improve program quality across all sectors, not just agriculture, using the different unifying frameworks we have developed. We can also provide better incentives for our staff to encourage self-development and retention. And we must continue our advocacy efforts at the national, regional and global levels in order to build an environment that enables women to claim their rights on their own.

CARE is currently developing a global agriculture strategy with a specific emphasis on women and girls. CARE has also just launched its global strategy on market engagement, which will scale up our work with high potential value chains, initially focusing on agriculture. Via the market strategy we hope to empower 10 million women and girls and their families to lift themselves out of poverty by promoting dignified employment and sustainable incomes in the agriculture sector.

We are already engaged with other donors and supporters and are taking all the steps to include our learning from A Place to Grow in our on-going programming. One example is research in six countries offices in Africa and South Asia generously funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in order to design a women and girls-centered agriculture program. We are also working with an NGO partner to include the women’s empowerment framework in the way we do our value chain analysis and the entire program cycle, with funding from USAID.

CARE International is developing a food security strategy which, in tandem with the agriculture and market strategies, will set the tone for CARE’s future strategic directions to empower women and girls to tackle structural and cultural barriers to their receiving equitable benefits from agricultural productivity and breaking the vicious cycle of food insecurity.

In order to carry out these three strategies, CARE has combined several sectors into a new Sustainable Livelihoods cluster, which will provide leadership to prioritize our work on the CARE agenda and oversee Circles of Learning to continue the exchange of learning and experiences using cutting-edge communication technologies.

CARE as an organization is committed to improving program quality by ensuring that women and girls truly benefit from our work and that staff capacity is continuously strengthened toward this end. Other key commitments include developing systems for using disaggregated impact measurement, partnerships with the private sector, development of global and local advocacy and policy agendas around women’s empowerment, and mobilization of long-term resources to achieve our ambitious goals.

Ultimately CARE wants to be known as a partner of choice and a transformative organization that takes all necessary steps to ensure women’s and girls’ voices and concerns are heard, and that supports their empowerment as they begin to access equal and increasing benefits from their involvement in the agriculture sector.

The journey continues....

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To access all reports, case studies and capacity strengthening materials produced under A Place to Grow, go to the CARE Economic Development Unit website: care.edu.org.