

# Women's empowerment and gender quality in CARE Mozambique's agriculture portfolio

## For A Place to Grow – An initiative to put women and girls at the center of CARE's agricultural programming

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A review of CARE Mozambique's agriculture portfolio from the perspective of impacting women's empowerment and gender equality was undertaken in 2008, as part of a larger CARE initiative – A Place to Grow. Funded by the H.G. Buffett Foundation, the review presents a snapshot of organizational and programming aspects at the time, and provides lessons for strengthening CARE's agricultural programming to benefit women and girls.

### Methodology

This review comprises a literature review, desk review of project documentation, interviews with CARE Mozambique management and field staff in Maputo, Nampula and Vilankulos, field visits to conservation agriculture (CA) projects, review of tools applied, focus groups with extension workers, use of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Framework (adapted from CARE's Strategic Impact Inquiry Framework), and development of two case studies (Olima Wo Suka in Nampula province, and Sustainable and Effective Economic Development or SEED in Inhambane. Both case studies are available as separate documents.)

### Background and conceptual underpinnings

CARE has been active in Mozambique since 1986, providing emergency assistance, food distribution, and disaster recovery and development activities. Since 1992, CARE has focused on agriculture, water and sanitation, micro-credit and savings, child and reproductive health, and HIV and AIDS, in the provinces of Nampula, Inhambane, Cabo Delgado, and Maputo.

CARE's *Theory of Change* hypothesizes that to have a sustainable impact on poverty, CARE should continue to address basic **human conditions**, the power imbalances that occur in relation to people's **social positions**, and the **enabling environments** that people create and in which they operate. It identifies specific underlying causes of poverty – gender inequality, poor governance, discrimination, and social and economic exclusion – and states that CARE should focus on women and girls as the key measure of its success, as they tend to suffer most from power imbalances and poverty.

The CARE Strategic Impact Inquiry (SII) Framework indicates that if CARE is to have any meaningful impact on women and girls, it should work across three dimensions: **agency** (women's capacities as individuals to take action), **structure** (social norms and institutions that codify and reinforce gender relations at every level of society, and **relations** (building relationships, coalitions and mutual support to expand agency and alter structures).

Together with the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), CARE has identified five pivotal *Levers of Change* for women's empowerment in the context of agriculture:

1. Land and property rights and contractual rights
2. Gendered division of labor/time poverty
3. Gendered control over labor and product of labor
4. Access to and control of water
5. Attention to gender equality by institutional systems

Included in the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture (WEA) Framework, each of these levers can be explored through the lens of **agency**, **structure** and **relations**, and their related sub-dimensions.

The *Women's Empowerment in Agriculture (WEA) Framework* helps identify power and inequalities in relation to women's agriculture-based livelihoods, and how they shape the flow of resources and opportunities. This points to suitable entry points for shifting ingrained beliefs and behaviors, e.g., working to change male ideas about women's and men's work and decision-making powers.

The CARE Mozambique Strategic Plan's goal for 2006-2009 is to *"Improve livelihood security for vulnerable households in support of national and local community efforts to overcome poverty and social injustice."* The goal is supported by four Strategic Directions (SD):

- SD I: Reduce the negative impact of and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in CARE and partners' workplaces, and in selected communities.
- SD II: Empower community groups and households, with a particular focus on women and youth, to increase economic and food security.
- SD III: Work in alliances and build capacity of partners to ensure sustainable water management and sanitation services for vulnerable communities.
- SD IV: Work in partnerships to learn and develop a stronger civil society and to improve governance.

SD II's Strategic Objectives are the most relevant to women and girls in Mozambique:

- Establish sustainable links between vulnerable households and the private sector through appropriate mechanisms that will ensure both receive fair market prices.
- Promote the rights of communities in relation to natural resources use.
- Work with partners to promote innovative and sustainable ways of increasing and diversifying income sources and improving nutrition status of vulnerable households.
- Reinforce community-based savings and credit associations to increase savings among the poorest of the poor.

CARE Mozambique's 2007 *Gender and Diversity Strategy and Plan of Action* has the following objectives:

- Mainstream gender in all programming for more positive impact on both men and women, boys and girls.
- Improve gender balance and organizational climate within CARE Mozambique.
- Work with partners to ensure gender principles and policies are elements in their partnership with CARE.
- Strengthen CARE's no-tolerance policy toward sexual exploitation and harassment in communities and our institutions.

### **Positioning products to demonstrate impacts**

Five projects from CARE Mozambique's agriculture/natural resources portfolio were reviewed, as they stood during June 2008, based on project documentation and interviews with staff, management, and beneficiaries of two projects. Findings were as follows:

- **Goals and objectives:** None of the five projects initially included a specific goal or objective around empowering women or promoting gender equality in the context of agriculture. However, Olima Wo Suka added an objective after the project began: *"Women farmers will benefit equally from this project."* A 2007 gender assessment<sup>1</sup> indicated that this project would have positive impacts on women by reducing the demand for their labor, improving the nutritional status of household members, providing for sale of surplus, and preserving forest cover, but these impacts are not monitored in a sex-disaggregated manner. SEED's Project Implementation Plan notes that *"CARE and its partners will facilitate processes that allow communities and institutions to reflect on inequalities that persist, and promote community-driven solutions for change."*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Report of consultancy to integrate a gender approach in conservation farming: Identifying key gender issues and recommendations for integrating a gender perspective into conservation farming projects in Nampula and Inhambane Provinces, Mozambique, Maputo, May 2008.

<sup>2</sup> SEED Project Implementation Plan (PIP), p. 70.

- **Beneficiary targeting:** Four of the five projects disaggregated beneficiaries by sex, at least minimally. For example, the SEED Project Implementation Plan indicated that “*at the impact level, the primary beneficiaries will be 6000 households, ...including poor, rural women and people living with HIV/AIDS.*” Disaggregating beneficiaries in the project design recognizes potentially different needs, interests, and constraints in a community and is the basis for designing and implementing appropriate actions for different groups.
- **Gender-sensitive indicators (GSI):** All five projects have at least one GSI. Some have only a quantitative GSI, e.g., percentage of women adopting conservation agriculture technologies, while others look at the qualitative nature of health and income. SEED includes a GSI about strategic links with other organizations. However, these GSIs are not always monitored or reported during implementation and most tend to measure input (number/percent women/men accessing services/training) or output (number/percent women/men trained/reached), rather than impact. Working with women and men in communities to develop their own indicators of empowerment would likely lead to more meaningful measurement of impact.

There is a need to strengthen the capacity of those designing agricultural M&E systems and instruments for collecting sex-disaggregated data. Agriculture M&E field staff is more familiar with data on numbers of people using a specific technology or number of hectares under cultivation. The final evaluation for the Viable Initiatives for the Development of Agriculture (VIDA II) suggested, for example, that measurement of empowerment is subjective and that there are so many causes of change taking place in communities that it is difficult to attribute it to CARE interventions alone.

- **Gender/power analysis:** All five projects included some minimal gender and/or power analysis. For example, VIDA II conducted an in-depth baseline survey with five years of follow up, which showed an increase in household assets, but most of the data are not disaggregated by sex of head of household. A gender assessment to inform implementation of Olima Wo Suka and Wurime Ga Wuhlayse projects identified critical constraints to women’s participation and proposed strengthening staff capacity, developing GSIs, preparing guidelines to support staff, strengthening group governance and organization skills, and strengthening extension workers’ skills to work with households affected by chronic illness. SEED’s baseline survey disaggregated data by ‘sex of head of household’, ‘vulnerable/non-vulnerable households’, and ‘households living with AIDS’, among others.<sup>3</sup> That project also undertook a qualitative analysis of household decision-making behavior using the *Income Expenditure Tree* tool.

### Exploring dimensions of women’s empowerment

Use of the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture (WEA) Framework revealed that CARE Mozambique agricultural projects tend to focus on women’s participation in activities, such as women’s groups and training, to increase social cohesion and strengthen self-esteem. They also lean toward improving women’s access to technology, resources, services and information, along with developing larger alliances to link women to markets and trade. The least common approaches were those that address gender equity in inheritance, laws, and customary practices. The most frequent sub-dimensions covered tend to fall under **agency**.

### Staffing

The following staffing challenges were indicated by staff and management in relation to agriculture projects:

- High staff turnover, particularly at the field level.
- Recruiting staff with the required capacity, particularly agricultural extension skills, knowledge and experience, and M&E.
- Access to transport and mobility for women, especially extension workers.

<sup>3</sup> Langworthy, Mark. SEED Project Baseline Survey report, CARE Mozambique, April 2007

## **Key Findings and Lessons Learned**

### **Programmatic**

- Agriculture projects have incorporated many useful approaches (such as Village Savings and Loans Associations) and tools, for example, the Income Expenditure Tree used by SEED.. Approaches that go beyond production to include value chains strengthen agricultural initiatives in general.
- Important social/gender/economic impacts can be made by addressing women's and men's differential interests and needs in relation to production, post-harvest (storage and value addition), marketing, and access to markets.
- Gender-sensitive indicators primarily focus on participation. Agriculture and country office (CO) staff want to strengthen their capacity to design more effective data collection measures to monitor and report on empowerment and gender equality.
- Gender analysis and follow-up could be strengthened by developing and applying simple guidelines on when and where to conduct an analysis (ideally an ongoing process of reflection, learning, action), and how and with whom to conduct it (areas to cover, quantitative/qualitative tools).

### **Organizational**

- Staff is increasingly challenged to address many cross-cutting (and sometimes competing) priorities, such as HIV and AIDS, gender equality, and climate change. They need strengthened capacity to address these issues in a way that is both complementary and comprehensive.
- Most of CARE's agriculture management has been exposed to women's empowerment and gender equality, either through training (not necessarily focused on agriculture) or work and life experience. However, project field staff lack awareness of, or capacity to use, analytical and action-oriented approaches and tools (e.g., working with men, dealing with gender-based violence, addressing differential impacts). This is exacerbated by the dearth of materials and tools in Portuguese focused on gender and agriculture. High staff turnover, due to other employment opportunities, family obligations or migration, affects retention of skills and knowledge. There is great interest in sharing learning, approaches and tools to support processes of change with communities, but while CARE has partnered with a number of governmental, non-governmental and private sector bodies on agricultural planning and business/marketing, little attention has been given to partnering with groups or organizations with expertise on women's rights or working with men.
- CARE Mozambique has contributed to advocacy efforts through studies on women's rights and agriculture – particularly women's land tenure security, and property and inheritance rights. Advocacy builds the foundation upon which agriculture programs are more effectively informed and designed.

### **External**

- A number of Mozambique's agriculture projects have benefited from longer-term donor commitment. Change in agriculture takes time due to environmental, economic and other factors, and social change typically takes even longer. A long-term commitment to a particular areas enables work with women and men farmers, community leaders, and partners to effect the changes needed to make a positive and lasting impact on women's and girls' lives in the context of agriculture. CARE's overall shift from project to program approaches also supports a longer-term commitment.