

# Women's Empowerment:

## Strategic Impact Inquiry Research Summary

**The Context:** In Tanzania, Sukuma women play a key role in agriculture and other income generating activities. However, men are often the main decision-makers in the home, and norms limit the roles of women in the public sphere and girls' access to education. In this context, CARE Tanzania has worked with communities to enhance livelihood security, particularly for women.

**The Project:** CARE Tanzania focused on its Magu District Livelihood Security Project (MDLSP) for the Strategic Impact Inquiry. The project operated within the Mwanza Region from 1995 to 2005. MDLSP aimed to increase livelihood security of vulnerable households, particularly those headed by women, by:

- Technology transfer of agricultural technologies and inputs;
- Capacity building of community based institutions to support income and food initiatives; and
- Economic development through village savings and loans (VSL) groups to increase access of credit for vulnerable households.

**CARE Tanzania's Strategic Impact Inquiry (SII):** For the SII, CARE Tanzania aimed to assess the impact of its work in promoting VSL on the lives of women and girls. It also provided a learning opportunity for CARE Tanzania to conduct a strategic impact assessment. The study aimed to answer three key questions:

- Does VSL result in economic empowerment for women?
- Does VSL result in women's social empowerment?
- How does CARE Tanzania's internal organization contribute to the impact of VSL on women's economic and social empowerment?

The [Strategic Impact Inquiry](#) (SII) seeks to evaluate CARE's impact on women's empowerment. For CARE Tanzania's full SII report, please contact: [pqlibrarian@care.org](mailto:pqlibrarian@care.org).

**The Methods:** CARE Tanzania's SII combined qualitative and quantitative methods in participatory research:

### RESEARCH DESIGN

- **Research team:** CARE Tanzania staff, NGO partners, external consultants
- **Workshop:** with CARE Mali and CARE USA, framework questions and categories

### DATA COLLECTION

- **Secondary Data Review:** program documents
- **Quantitative Questionnaire** (181 women): Levels of empowerment, economic security of members and non-members of VSL
- **Focus Group Discussions** (24 groups): Women's empowerment (characteristics, networks, roles in society and household), views on CARE's work
- **Open Inquiry, Unstructured Interviews** (9 women, 6 girls, 6 men): Case studies around women's aspirations, and VSL impact

### DATA ANALYSIS

- **Triangulation:** Data validation across methods, locations and researchers
- **External Analysis:** External consultants conducted initial analysis
- **Participatory Analysis:** Team analysis of findings, given local context/culture

### Limitations:

- No baseline data for comparison
- Limited time for analysis of quantitative data
- Translation inaccuracies in study questions

# TANZANIA

# Women's Empowerment:

## Strategic Impact Inquiry Research Summary

### Women's Own Views of Empowerment:

#### AGENCY

Purpose in life  
 Confident, successful  
 Engaged in income generating activities, hard-working  
 Educated  
 Healthy family, well-spaced children  
 Takes care of family, Decision-making  
 Material security, good conduct, respect for others  
 Feeling superior, looking down on others, jealousy (*as noted by others*)

#### STRUCTURE

Access to labor and income

#### RELATIONS

Work recognized  
 Appreciated,  
 Strong, supportive relationship with husband

### Impact on Empowerment

#### Implications:

*VSL cannot lift women from poverty/secure empowerment. Both require an holistic, contextually grounded women's empowerment theory of change and strategy.*

- CARE Tanzania's integrated VSL strategies (credit and agricultural technology; and training in business skills, gender issues, HIV/AIDS and advocacy) linked to women's empowerment and economic/food security.
- VSL can be an entry point to address other issues important to women.
- Understand empowerment in local contexts to ensure interventions account for elements of empowerment important to target group.
- Develop alternative strategies to reach the poorest.
- Social capital, increasing access to social support/community, are benefits valued more highly by some women than wealth creation.
- Provide alternative options to meet women's future demands for larger loans.
- Tackle societal attitudes and practices that perpetuate discrimination.

***CARE Tanzania must strengthen alignment of its program frameworks, Long Range Strategic Plan, principles and approaches with program design and implementation.***

- Develop organizational strategies to translate program principles, approaches and frameworks to action on the ground.
- Partner with others to achieve mutual goals.
- Be accountable to key stakeholders for our decisions, actions, and results.
- Work in a manner that brings positive change in achievement of long-term goals.
- Recognize the value, worth, potential and dignity of every person.

#### *Design, Monitoring and Evaluation*

- Achieve alignment between programming frameworks, principles, Long-run strategic plan and program design, and implementation.
- Monitor unexpected impacts of VSL participation on women and families to ensure negative impacts are identified and addressed.

#### *Staff Capacity Building*

- Recognize the value of diversity, and promote tolerance, understanding and equity among staff, partners and communities.
- CARE must have women in strategic positions, not just female staff.
- Train staff to build competencies and link skills to project application.

Agency	Structures	Relations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Savings, housing investments, household assets and control of them</li> <li>• Engage in income generating activities with VSL funds (Female household heads more dependent on VSL for capital)</li> <li>• Food security, health, quality housing (less for female household heads).</li> <li>• Freedom of public participation (limited), voice</li> <li>• Participation in community-based organizations, social networks and groups, and leadership in these groups (less for married participants)</li> <li>• Decision-making in home and problem-solving</li> <li>• General acceptance of domestic violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to education and health services (less for female household heads)</li> <li>• Access to information (less for married participants)</li> <li>• Representation (members running for positions in election – less for female household heads).</li> <li>• Female household-heads face discrimination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence public decisions at local levels</li> <li>• Deal with political and public authority</li> <li>• Mobilize, and be represented as a group.</li> <li>• Husbands of members more gender sensitive, less accepting of domestic violence</li> <li>• Division between members and non-members of VSL</li> </ul>

\* Most marginalized and poorest excluded from VSL groups

For more information, please contact Aba Sey (asey@care.or.tz), Balaram Thapa (bthapa@care.or.tz), Dorcas Robinson (drobinson@care.or.tz), Leticia Pima (lpima@care.or.tz), Caroline Pinder (caroline.pinder@btinternet.com).