

Tropical Cyclone Gita Kingdom of Tonga



Women Lead in Emergencies Pilot Final Report January 2019



It starts with equal



Acknowledgements

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This report was written by Charlie Damon, Pacific Humanitarian Capacity Coordinator, CARE Australia.

Cover Photo caption: Meleane Mahe (MORDI Gender Officer and Tonga Red Cross 'Eua Coordinator) and Siu Havili (MORDI) talking with Melape 'Aukamea, Chair of Block 2 women's group, September 2018
Photo: Frederique Lehoux, CARE

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Abbreviations

DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DPO	Disabled Peoples Organisation
DWA	Tonga Department of Women's Affairs
ECHO	Europe Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
HAG	Humanitarian Advisory Group
LLEE	Live & Learn Environmental Education
MFAT	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MIA	Tonga Ministry of Internal Affairs
MORDI	Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovation Tonga Trust
SOGIE	Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression
TC	Tropical Cyclone
UN	United Nations
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)
WLIE	Women Lead in Emergencies

Executive Summary

Category 4 Tropical Cyclone (TC) Gita struck Tonga on 12 February 2018. TC Gita was the strongest storm on record to make landfall in Tonga. It caused wide spread damage, affecting an estimated 70% of the population or 80,000 men, women, boys and girls, causing destruction to homes, water supply systems, farming land and livelihoods.

CARE Australia responded to this disaster with local partners, MORDI Tonga Trust (MORDI) (who implemented all of the community-based response activities) and Live & Learn Environmental Education (LLEE) Tonga who provided short-term advisory support. The response program included assistance provided in the areas of shelter, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), food security and livelihoods, with a cross-cutting focus on gender and social inclusion.

CARE International recognizes that globally, women and marginalised groups are not able to meaningfully participate in humanitarian action on an equitable basis. CARE research into this topic resulted in the *'She is a humanitarian'* report¹ which highlighted the myriad of ways in which women's voices go unheard in humanitarian decision-making.

To respond to this issue, CARE International is conducting a global pilot project called **'Women Lead in Emergencies'**. This approach aims to support women advance their own leadership and recovery to disasters. 'Women Lead' is a grass-roots process where marginalised women directly affected by disaster, lead or disaster influence key areas of humanitarian response. CARE then supports activities that women themselves decide will strengthen their voice within humanitarian and development spheres and over public decisions that affect their lives and communities.

The Tonga TC Gita response was selected as a pilot site for the 'Women Lead in Emergencies' approach. This report outlines the project development, activities and outcomes.

The data that informs this report includes primary data including household surveys, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, as well as secondary data.



Photo Caption: Women attending women's focus group consultations, 'Ohonua, 'Eua Island May 2018

Photo: Angelica Mafileo, MORDI

¹ CARE International, *She is a Humanitarian*, 2017 https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CARE_She-is-a-humanitarian-report_Feb-2017_high-res.pdf

Women and decision making on 'Eua Island

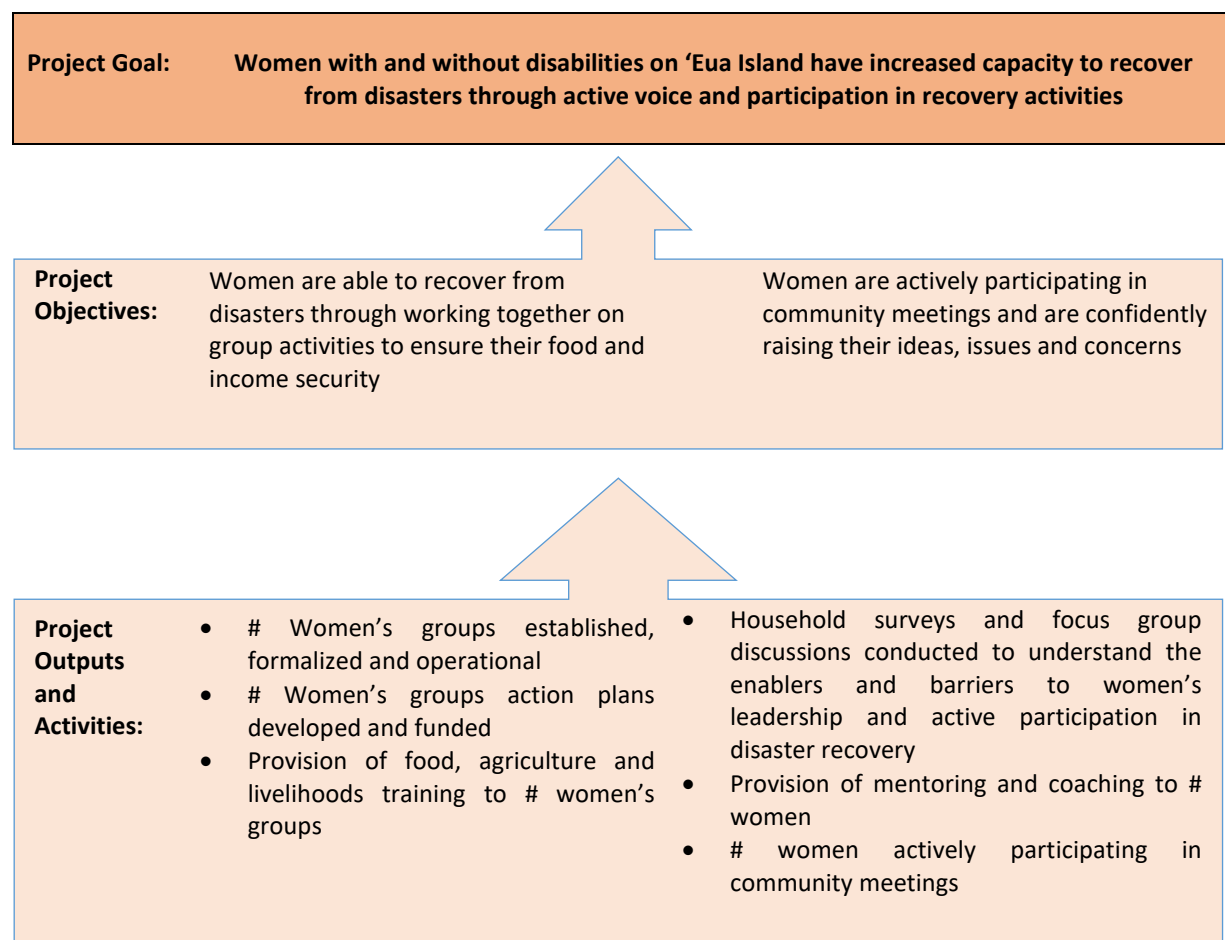
'Eua Island is typical of that found in the CARE TC Gita Rapid Gender Analysis. Men are the predominant decision makers whilst women may have attended some consultation meetings, they did not have the confidence to speak up.

There are some women's groups in some churches but there is no one group that brings the whole of community together. The National Council for Women used to function on 'Eua island but is reportedly no longer functioning.² Women are known to meet in informal groups, such as family groupings, when making tapa for example. However, comments from women participating in women's focus group discussions highlighted that women coming together to discuss community issues was unusual for the women of 'Eua.

During initial household surveys, women highlighted a number of barriers to their participation in decision-making bodies. These included prioritising domestic chores over attending community meetings, caring for children, social and economic status and health. Confidence was also highlighted with many women saying that they feel "too shy" to talk in meetings.

In terms of formal decision making spaces, the 'Eua District officer does hold monthly meetings which can be attended by anyone from the community. Again, confidence was noted as the main reason women do not always speak at these meetings despite the District Officer being female.

Women Lead in Emergencies Tonga Pilot Project Theory of Change



² Key Informant Interview, May 2018

Women Lead in Emergencies Pilot Project results

Although the project was implemented over a relatively short time frame, it has demonstrated considerable impact and made important positive changes in the lives of the women participants. The final external evaluation conducted independently by the Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) of the CARE / MORDI / LLEE TC Gita response noted *“The women’s leadership project on ‘Eua is very recently launched but there are some indications that it has already achieved impact. Seven women’s groups were provided with specific livelihood support that has reportedly enhanced community cohesion and generated income for families. There is also some evidence of the project having a more transformative role from the perspective of the women themselves”*.³

Through this project, women re-established or formed 7 women’s groups, reflecting the 7 ‘blocks’ or sub-communities that form the community of ‘Ohonua, the main community of ‘Eua island. Some groups had previously been established by the ‘Eua Women’s Council in 2013 who had also supported some of them to open bank accounts as well as establish a governance structure with a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. All groups were no longer active and their bank accounts had been dormant for a number of years. This project has revitalised these groups as well as give them some joint purpose.

Through this project, the women’s groups were able to come together and decide how they would like to work together collectively to recover from the impacts of TC Gita. Additionally, groups also were able to voice their ongoing recovery needs to the District Officer of ‘Eua island as well as be engaged by the local Government for clean-up activities.

All groups chose to work collectively on some form of income generation activity and many of them also agreed on some form of food security initiative. Through this project, all 7 groups made some kind of an income. Some have distributed to members, some are saving these funds for different purposes (emergencies, financial support to those in need, repair and maintenance of equipment) and some are reinvesting these funds into their group with the purchase of more materials. .

In September 2018 CARE conducted a monitoring visit with these groups and conducted surveys with men and women from the 7 ‘blocks’ that form ‘Ohonua. Feedback from both men and women was overwhelmingly positive with all of the women interviewed stating that the project had made a positive change to their lives. Many explained that relations, communication and women’s voice at a household level was enhanced as they are now working more closely with their husbands and their family to rebuild and improve their lives after the disaster. At this point of the project all women’s groups were working collectively to implement recovery activities. Many of them had already started making an income with some groups dividing that between members and some saving it for future disasters.

For those groups who had decided to work on collective gardening activities as a means of increasing food and income security, all women interviewed stated that the project had enabled them to access more fresh, healthy and nutritious produce. This is an unintended but very important outcome of project activities so far and important for a country where obesity has reached epidemic proportions.⁴

In January 2019, CARE and MORDI conducted an endline survey of the project. Findings demonstrated that the WLIE project has had an overall positive impact on the community. Endline results found that that project has increased cooperation both inside the household and within the community as a whole. It has also had a positive impact on the women who participated in the project with many reporting more decision making power, increased cooperation with other women, and an increased

³ Humanitarian Advisory Group ‘Tropical Cyclone Gita Response Program Evaluation’ November 2018, page 25

⁴ CARE Australia ‘Women Lead in Emergencies Pilot Monitoring Report’ September 2018, page 6

ability to provide for their families and play a more active role in helping their community recovery from the disaster. An additional unintended achievement of the project was that many women and men reported that their households are now eating healthier as result of the project due to community garden activity.

Endline survey results also found that women are increasingly rethinking traditional gendered norms, roles and responsibilities within the community and within their household. Thus, this project is a great example of how emergency response programs can successfully contribute to women's empowerment and positive social change in communities affected by a disaster. However, the short length of the project limited the ability to support lasting/sustainable social change and therefore a follow up longer term development project is recommended to capitalise and build on the projects achievements.

The results also suggest that additional support is needed to increase women's ability and confidence to negotiate outside of their household. Findings also indicated that mitigation strategies, as well as engaging men and boys to support the redistribution of tasks and equitable divisions of labour should be considered in future WLiE initiatives or any follow up project activities. This would avoid increased workload for women as well as enable men and boys to support the positive changes that are being accomplished for women in their household and their community.

In terms of what is next for the groups, for the duration of the project, CARE have been liaising with the DFAT funded Tonga Skills program in order to link their training and skills development to the women's groups. To date this has eventuated in training to increase skills and build livelihoods, such as sewing and has been instrumental in creating an ongoing 'partnership' or working relationship between the women of 'Eua and the Tonga Skills program which will be continued throughout 2019.

Additionally, efforts are underway to incorporate these women's groups into MORDI's long-term community development and agriculture program.

Conclusions and recommendations

This project has demonstrated it that it is possible to implement women led activities as part of humanitarian responses and make an immediate impact. This project demonstrated that women had increased confidence, increased access to Government decision makers, as well as improved division of labour in the household and community.

There are some key learnings to be drawn from this pilot project for consideration for others wanting to adopt this approach:

1. Short-term inputs can make a difference

This project had demonstrated positive impact for those women and men involved. However, due to limitations of time and project funding, this pilot was not able to make use of best practice e.g. building on existing programs, allowing adequate time for activities which would significantly increase benefits and support lasting change. However, despite this, this project had demonstrated positive impact for those women and men involved.

2. Timing of support to women's groups

The WLiE approach is founded on the premise of shared and collaborative ideas generated by women to support women to collaborate on their recovery needs. However, many of the women were still struggling to meet their basic needs after TC Gita. During initial consultations with these groups in May 2018, they all stated that they needed water tanks as they still did not yet have adequate access

to water. The nature of the program meant focusing on activities that could support communal and collective recovery for all members of the women's group. This, plus limited funds, meant it was not possible to provide HH water tanks. This made it challenging for the CARE and MORDI team to help women to think about 'other' activities they might want to engage in to support their own recovery when they were lacking their most basic needs.

3. Women Lead in Emergencies must be conducted alongside other response activities

Related to the above point, WLiE is designed to be funding and activities specifically for women's participation and leadership BUT we recommend that WLiE is only done alongside other emergency response and livelihood activities to ensure it is part of a comprehensive response package. This is particularly important in emergency response given the focus on meeting basic needs but is also supported by the evidence on most effective approaches to women's empowerment in development contexts too i.e. that multidimensional programmes that combine activities to increase women's economic, political and social power work best.

4. Work with existing women's groups and structures

Where possible, WLiE projects should work with existing groups and structures, even if they are dormant. Even in a short term project, the chances of benefits out living project activities are far greater if working with existing women's groups, whether these are faith-based, self-help, solidarity, whatever and are also more sustainable.

5. Provide ongoing support to women's groups

Ideally, response projects should be based on existing programs and be absorbed into long terms programs at the end of response projects. This can therefore strengthen groups and increase their sustainability particularly in building skills and confidence of women to meaningfully engage in development planning and processes.

6. Provide or facilitate technical support to enable more involvement of women with disabilities

This project had a few women with disabilities but not in every group. As part of project set-up, Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs) should be engaged to support women's groups identify women with disabilities and create an enabling environment for their participation. Additionally, staff employed to implement this project also need to be sensitised to the importance of engaging women with disabilities and working alongside DPOs to enable this to happen.

7. Men and boys engagement strategies

Any project that is working with women to rethink gender norms, role and responsibilities has to engage men. This includes husbands, male leaders in the community and other male decision makers. Strategies to positively engage men will lead to their support for the project or the approach and potentially lead to them becoming champions of women led activities and increased women's leadership in their community, as well as reduce the possibility of them being a barrier to project progress.

8. Dedicated staff who are committed to gender equality

To implement this kind of project requires dedicated staff. Staff to facilitate discussions, mobilise inputs, liaise and link with other partners and service providers, provide ongoing mentoring support and to monitor activity implementation. This project was able to build on an existing strong network via one staff member but had difficulty recruiting additional staff for the project. This led to the work load, stress and responsibility being placed on one person.

Additionally, staff need to have the necessary commitment to gender equality or requisite understanding or skills to foster gender equality.

SECTION 1: Background and Context to TC Gita and Gender in Tonga

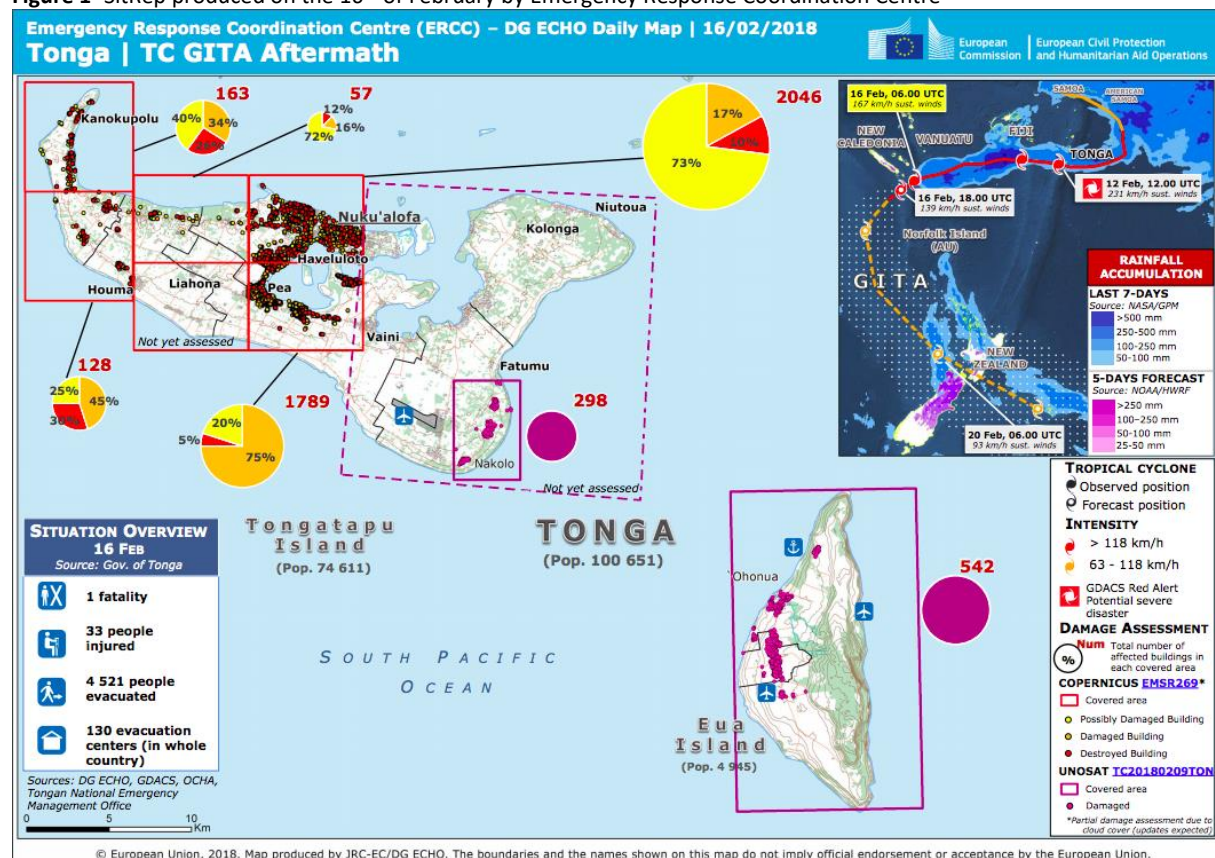
1.1 Tropical Cyclone Gita

On the 12th of February 2018, Tonga was struck by Tropical Cyclone Gita. The category 4 cyclone was the largest storm on record to make landfall in Tonga. It caused wide spread damage, affecting an estimated 70% of the population or 80,000 men, women, boys and girls, causing destruction to homes, water supply systems, farming land and livelihoods. See Figure 1 below for details on the extent of the destruction.

In response to the damage and the immediate needs of the affected population, taking in to account the expertise of the agencies, CARE Australia (CARE) formed a partnership with MORDI Trust Tonga (MORDI) and Live & Learn Environmental Education (LLEE) to deliver humanitarian assistance on the islands of Tongatapu and 'Eua.

The response program included assistance provided in the areas of shelter, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), food security and livelihoods, with an underlying focus on gender and social inclusion. Donor funding for the response program through CARE Australia included DFAT funding through the Australian Humanitarian Partnership, ECHO and the START Network. Additional grants directly to MORDI from Oxfam and Rotary/MFAT also formed part of the overall response program.

Figure 1- SitRep produced on the 16th of February by Emergency Response Coordination Centre



1.2 TC Gita Rapid Gender Analysis

In February 2018, CARE undertook a TC Gita Rapid Gender Analysis (see Annex) to provide initial information about gender roles, responsibilities, capacities and vulnerabilities of women, men, girls and boys, people of diverse Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) and other marginalised people prior to and after TC Gita.

The TC Gita Rapid Gender Analysis found the following:

Gender roles

In Tonga, women and men undertake distinct and often complementary roles in the productive, household and community spheres. Men's roles lie predominantly outside the home, often in agriculture and fishing.⁵ In rural areas, men farm plots of land called 'tax allotments' which involves the preparation of the land, planting, weed control and general crop management. Heavy physical labour and activities considered 'risky' are largely undertaken by men. However, women are increasingly undertaking these farming activities in the absence of adult males.

Men also prepare, plant and maintain commercial crops such as sandalwood and vanilla, while women and children help to pollinate the vanilla plants. Men sell these products in local and export markets while women generally sell any surplus crops in the market. Food preparation is shared between male and female family members and men are responsible for preparing and cooking the 'umu' or earth oven on Sundays or special occasions. Both women and men are engaged in paid work, including as civil servants, and significant numbers of (predominantly) men travel overseas to engage in seasonal employment. Women and girls are primarily responsible for caring for family members, engage in a wide range of community, family and church activities and are also primarily responsible for sanitation and hygiene in the home. Women, often with the help of girls also produce tapa and weave handcrafts, mats, clothing and accessories which are worn daily and on various social occasions and form a critical part of Tongan identity.

Access and control of resources

- Relatively low rates of participation in the formal economy, as well as the lack of land rights, mean women generally have limited access to and control over resources.
- Women are active in the informal economy leading small and micro-enterprises and small retail shops.
- Handicrafts are a significant source of income for many women.
- In general, women have less access to financial services, training and extension services and resources, and decision-making about household income and expenditures varies according to the household.



Photo Caption: Women making Tapa (traditional cloth) in 'Ohonua, 'Eua island, September 2018
Photo: Frederique Lehoux, CARE

⁵ Pacific Horticultural & Agricultural Market Access Program (PHAMA) 2016 Gender Analysis Technical Report – Tongatapu, Kingdom of Tonga 2016.

Participation and decision-making

- A complex interplay of factors, including but not limited to hereditary status, gender, age, birth rank, education, financial means and contributions govern an individual's status in Tongan society. Husbands generally have higher authority than wives and men are generally considered to be the main decision-makers.
- However, depending on the household, women and men often make decisions in different areas or make significant decisions jointly. Men generally make decisions about tax allotment plots while women are generally responsible for decisions related to the use of land for home gardens.
- According to the 2016 census just under a quarter of all households in Tongatapu and a fifth in 'Eua are headed by women. Women heading their own households are more likely to make major household decisions, however in some cases male relatives may also be involved.
- However, the idea of male leadership at all levels remains prevalent. At present there are two female members in parliament of a possible 17 People's Representatives and female representation at sub-national level very low with one female District Officer out of 21 (who is located in 'Eua), and three female Town Officers out of a total of 153.⁶
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Gender-based violence

Despite society's traditionally high regard for women, violence against women remains prevalent and underreported in Tonga. One of every five women aged 15-49 years reported experiencing intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months.⁷ A 2005 UN study highlighted heightened vulnerability to violence, sexual abuse and rape in Tonga for women with disabilities. Tonga has no minimum age of sexual consent and therefore statutory rape is not a crime.⁸ A 'no drop policy' is in place and perpetrators of violence against women and children are prosecuted under the Criminal Act. Bullying younger people of diverse SOGIE in schools is also reportedly fairly commonplace.

Enabling environment

The Department of Women's Affairs (DWA) within the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) is responsible for coordinating and implementing national policy on gender and development. MIA is also responsible for local government and disability inclusion and coordinates the Safety and Protection Cluster.

⁶ CARE Australia, *Tropical Cyclone Gita Kingdom of Tonga, Rapid Gender Analysis Sub-focus on Shelter and Food Security and Livelihoods*, 26 February 2018, Page 4

⁷ Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili 2012

⁸ PHAMA, *Gender Analysis Technical Report – Tongatapu, Kingdom of Tonga* 2016

1.3 Women and decision making on 'Eua Island

'Eua Island is typical of that found in the Rapid Gender Analysis. Men are the predominant decision makers and focus groups discussions found that women felt that they had not been consulted on response activities. Whilst women may have attended some consultation meetings, they did not have the confidence to speak up.

There are some women's groups in some churches but there is no one group that brings the whole of community together. The National Council for Women used to function on 'Eua island but is reportedly no longer functioning.⁹

Women are known to meet in informal groups, such as family groupings, when making tapa for example. However, comments from women participating in women's focus group discussions highlighted that women coming together to discuss community issues was unusual for the women of 'Eua.

During initial household surveys, women highlighted a number of barriers to their participation in decision-making bodies. These included prioritising domestic chores over attending community meetings, caring for children, social and economic status and health. Confidence was also highlighted with many women saying that they feel "too shy" to talk in meetings.

In terms of formal decision making spaces, the 'Eua District officer does hold monthly meetings which can be attended by anyone from the community. Again, confidence was noted as the main reason women do not always speak at these meetings despite the District Officer being female.

"Sometimes I feel shy to talk in community meetings because I am poor and it feels as though people will not listen to me"

Household Survey respondent, 'Eua Island, June 2018

"Being a single women, sometimes in the communities only those who have 'proper' families are the ones that are listened to"

Household Survey respondent, 'Eua Island, June 2018



*Photo Caption: Women attending women's focus group consultations, May 2018
Photo: Charlie Damon, CARE*

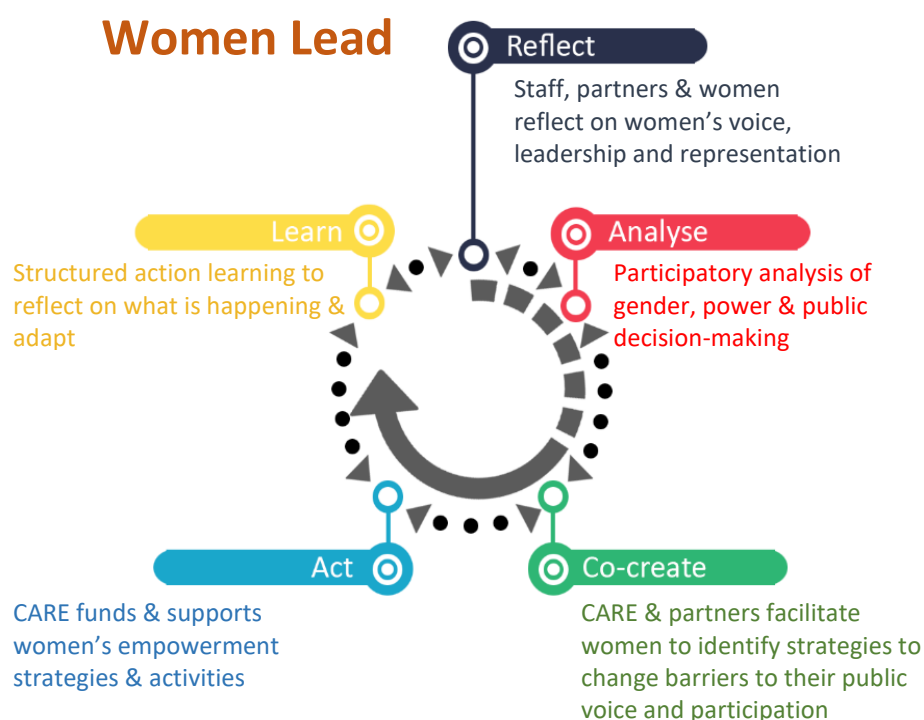
⁹ Key Informant Interview, May 2018

SECTION 2: Women Lead in Emergencies Project Concept

2.1 Introduction to ‘Women Lead in Emergencies’

CARE recognizes that, globally, women and marginalised groups are not able to meaningfully participate in humanitarian actions. CARE’s own research into this topic resulted in the ‘She is a humanitarian’ report¹⁰ which highlighted the myriad of ways in which women’s voices go unheard in humanitarian decision-making.

To respond to this issue, CARE International is conducting a global pilot for a ‘*Women Lead in Emergencies*’ approach. This approach aims to support women advance their own leadership and recovery to disasters. ‘*Women Lead*’ is designed to support a grass-roots process where marginalised women directly affected by crisis lead or influence key areas of humanitarian response. CARE supports women’s groups to reflect on barriers to their participation and leadership in decision-making. Women Lead then funds and supports the activities that women themselves decide will strengthen their voice within humanitarian and development programmes and over public decisions that affect their lives and communities.



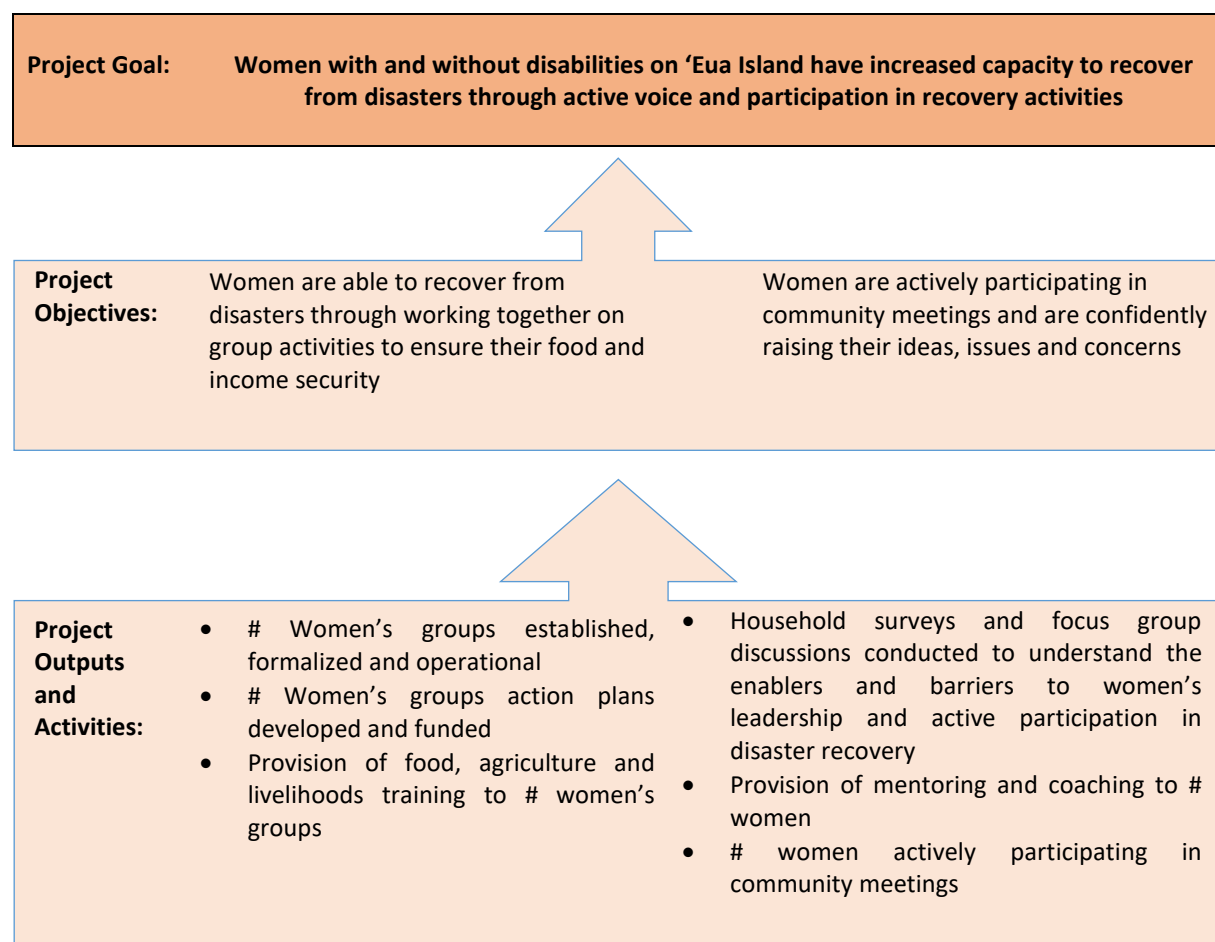
‘*Women Lead*’ is a five-step approach developed by CARE International to work with marginalised and crisis-affected women to strengthen women’s voice and leadership in programming and in community and local governance and decision-making. Importantly, it aims to transform the *causes* of gender inequality and exclusion by creating more equitable power relations and social and governance structures – for example by engaging men, male leadership and other power-holders – alongside building women’s collective agency and leadership. To do this, Women Lead builds on CARE’s programmatic learning and CARE’s tried-and-tested tools including Rapid Gender Analysis, Social Analysis and Action, and Community Action Planning. Women Lead is a joint initiative between CARE’s Global Gender in Emergencies and Inclusive Governance teams.

¹⁰ CARE International, *She is a Humanitarian*, 2017 https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CARE_She-is-a-humanitarian-report_Feb-2017_high-res.pdf

2.2 'Women Lead in Emergencies', Tonga

The Women Lead in Emergencies pilot project for the TC Gita response in Tonga ran from May 2018 until January 2019 (8 Months). It was implemented in 'Onhonua community on 'Eua Island, working with approximately 110 and 195 women across 7 'blocks' (sub-communities) in 'Ohunua.

Project Theory of Change



Project Activities and Timeline

Initial consultations in May 2018 determined that women wanted to form ‘collectives’ or groups. ‘Ohonua is divided into 7 blocks so it was decided to work with women from each of these 7 blocks who formed or re-formed groups some of which had been previously established by the ‘Eua Women’s Council in 2013. Group membership was open to any women who were interested in each block. Each group decided on a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, as per previous (though dormant) structures established in 2013.

In June 2018, CARE and MORDI facilitated discussions with groups of women from each of the blocks. During these discussions, each of the groups developed and agreed an action plan, discussed ways of working and agreed a way forward. No parameters were placed on women’s groups discussions in terms of which sectors or activities to select. It was a completely open process with just guiding questions around their discussion for it to be focussed on what they needed to do to enable their own recovery and work collectively for this.

It was made clear however that CARE / MORDI could only support activities up to a certain budget amount with any remaining activities the groups having to implement themselves.

Once groups had decided their activities and presented their plans, in July 2018 CARE and MORDI then procured any necessary items (such as seeds, tools, lawnmowers) and distributed these items to the groups in August 2018 so that they could commence their recovery activities.

The distribution of items took place through a formal ceremony attended by women’s group representatives, Government representatives (including the ‘Eua Government representative, the District Officer and Town Officers) and MORDI and Red Cross staff.

During the ceremony, the ‘Eua Government representative offered to pay the women’s groups for community clean-up activities. The next day one of the women’s groups approached the ‘Eua Government representative to take up this offer and were subsequently paid to do clean up. This is a great example of women having the space and channels to approach Government directly.



Photo Caption: Women attending women’s focus group consultations, May 2018

Photo: Angelica Mafileo, MORDI



*Photo Captions: Preparation of distribution of items to Women's Groups in the MORDI warehouse
Photos: Villiami Sokai, MORDI*



*Photo Caption: Formal ceremony to distribute items to Women's Groups from the MORDI warehouse
Photos: Villiami Sokai, MORDI*

A summary of each women's group activity is outlined below by block.

Block No	Number of members	Key activities
1	29 women aged 29 -74	Gardening and cooking equipment for use as a 'loan' scheme
2	20+ women aged 21-70	Gardening and cooking equipment as well as a sewing machine for use as a loan scheme. Conducted community clean-up work for which they were paid by the Government.
3	23 women aged 21 - 71	Establishment of two gardening plots with produce being used for consumption, distribution to other community members and sale
4	32 women aged 20 -65	Received gardening materials which they have used to create 3 gardens. They are using any money from the sale of vegetables and rental of tools to deposit into their group bank account.
5	30 women aged 18 -70	Received materials to develop a women's gardening plot and have created 2 gardens. Produce from the gardens was used for own household consumption, for sale in the market and some produce was distributed to vulnerable families.
6	30 women aged 20 – 50+	Received materials to create a women's garden and have created two plots which have a staggered harvest. The produce from the gardens is being used for eating, distributing to other community members and selling.
7	30+ women aged 18 -75	7 have 30+ members aged from 18 -75. They received gardening and sewing materials through which they raise funds by renting them out

Timeline of activities:

- **May 2018: Initial consultations with women**

Initial consultations were conducted by CARE and MORDI and consisted of two large meetings with women from blocks 1 -7. Women were asked how were they affected by TC Gita, what support they had received to date, if they had any remaining needs, whether they were interested in working together to support each other to recover and if so, what activities could they do together to do this.

- **June 2018: Household surveys conducted and verification of initial consultations**

Household surveys were conducted to inform the project and explore more deeply any enablers and barriers to women's participation in decision making. During this period CARE and MORDI also worked with women's groups to verify May discussions and supported the groups to develop and agree action plans, discuss ways of working and agree a way forward. During this time women's groups also established or re-established their governance structures.

- **July 2018: Materials to support women's groups procured**

MORDI and CARE procured and delivered items to support each women's group action plans. These varied per group depending on the outcome of their discussions and included materials such as home and community gardening kits, sewing materials and cooking materials.

- **August 2018: Distribution of items to women's groups**

Materials were distributed to women's groups via a formal ceremony at the MORDI warehouse on 'Eua. Women then started implementing their project activities.

- **September 2018: CARE and MORDI joint monitoring visit**

During this visit, key informant interviews were conducted with the Chairs of each of the group (7) and male and female household surveys (17) were conducted. Women's groups were continuing their project activities during this time.

- **January 2019: CARE and MORDI joint end of project visit and endline**

CARE and MORDI conducted an end of project visit to 'Eua. During this visit 34 endline surveys were conducted and 7 key informant interviews.

SECTION 3: Summary of Results

Despite the project being of a short time frame, it had demonstrated impact and made a difference to the lives of the women who participated in it. The Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) independent final evaluation of the CARE / MORDI / LLEE TC Gita response noted *“The women’s leadership project on ‘Eua is very recently launched but there are some indications that it has already achieved impact. Seven women’s groups were provided with specific livelihood support that has reportedly enhanced community cohesion and generated income for families. There is also some evidence of the project having a more transformative role from the perspective of the women themselves”*.¹¹

Through this project, all 7 groups made some kind of an income. Some have distributed to members, some are saving these funds for different purposes (emergencies, financial support to those in need, repair and maintenance of equipment) and some are reinvesting these funds into their group with the purchase of more materials. In terms of background it appears that the ‘Eua Womens Council set up the 7 blocks with bank accounts in 2013 as well as a structure of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. The groups and their bank accounts had been dormant for a number of years and this project seems to have revitalised them as well as give them some joint purpose.

The distribution of items took place with a formal ceremony which was attended by women’s group representatives, Government representatives (including the ‘Eua Government representative, the District Officer and Town Officers) and MORDI and Red Cross staff. During the ceremony, the ‘Eua Government representative offered to pay the women’s groups for community clean-up activities. The next day one of the women’s groups approached the ‘Eua Government representative to take up this offer and were subsequently paid to do clean up. This is a great example of women having the space and channels to approach Government directly. Additionally, it gave women the opportunity to engage in activities that are traditionally male-led as well as be paid for them.

In September 2018 CARE conducted a monitoring visit with these groups and conducted surveys with men and women from the 7 blocks. Feedback from both men and women was overwhelmingly positive with all of the women interviewed stating that the project had made a positive change to their lives. Many explained that they are now working more closely with their husbands and their family to rebuild and improve their lives after the disaster. At this point of the project all women’s groups had started implementing activities and many of them had already started making an income with some groups dividing that between members and some saving it for future disasters.

During this visit, all of the women’s group representatives interviewed stated that to date the project had made a positive change to their lives. Many explained that they were now working more closely with their husbands and their family to rebuild and improve their lives after the disaster. As part of the monitoring visit, 17 surveys (7 women, 10 men) were also conducted. Survey responses were also

“[We are] very happy because they [the men] started to recognise that women can do something. Women asked men to help with making the fence around the vegetable garden and then men saw that they were doing something new..... Women and children are very happy not having to rely on men completely.”

Female Community representative, HAG TC Gita Final Evaluation, October 2018

¹¹ Humanitarian Advisory Group ‘Tropical Cyclone Gita Response Program Evaluation’ November 2018, page 25

positive with 94% of male and female respondents stating that the project had made positive changes within their household. Of those respondents, 75% named increased cooperation between men, women and within the community more generally as a positive change that they are experiencing as a result of the project.

There were also anecdotal reports that the project has reduced women's dependence on men. 71% of women surveyed stated that through the project they had learnt how to rely on themselves and their community to increase their ability to respond and recover from disasters through working together and using the equipment that was provided.

“Now I know that women are hardworking people. If women had the resources (equipment and tools) they'll do the job better than men”

Man, aged 68, 'Ohonua, 'Eua Island, September 2018

For those conducting gardening activities, all women interviewed stated that the project had enabled them to access more fresh, healthy and nutritious produce (which is an unintended outcome of project activities so far and important for a country where obesity has reached epidemic proportions).¹²

At this point of the project it was noted that despite this project being for women's groups, there was space for men to participate in project activities, with most women's group representatives noting complementarity between men and women's contributions. For example, men contributed in specific project activities such as land preparations before planting (tractor), fence building, picking up rubbish and then women did the planting and so on. 90% of men interviewed stated that the project had made a positive change to their lives and that they had learnt about the importance of cooperation between men and women and how this supports their community.

In January 2019, CARE and MORDI conducted an endline survey of the project. Findings were that the WLiE project has had an overall positive impact on the community. Endline results found that that project has increased cooperation both inside the household and within the community as a whole. It has also had a positive impact on the women who participated in the project with many reporting more decision making power as a result of their participation, increased cooperation with other women, and an increased ability to provide for their families and play a more active role in helping their community recovery from the disaster. An additional unintended achievement of the project was that many women and men reported that their households are now eating healthier as result of the project due to community garden activity.

The endline also found that women can be seen challenging traditional gendered roles and responsibilities within the community and within their household. Thus, this project is a great example of how emergency response programs can successfully contribute to women's empowerment and positive social change in communities affected by a disaster. However, the short length of the project limits the amount of sustained social change that can be achieved thus, a follow up longer term development project is recommended to capitalise and build on the projects achievements.

Endline results also suggest that more work needs to be done to increase the women's ability and confidence to negotiate outside of their household. There were also some reports that suggest for a very small number of women the project might have increased their workload, and though this was not reported by the majority of endline participants, it would be a very damaging unintended result of the project. Therefore, mitigation strategies to safeguard against such a results should be considered such as engaging men and boys in the project in order for each household to effectively

¹² CARE Australia 'Women Lead in Emergencies Pilot Monitoring Report' September 2018, page 6

be able to share different tasks, and allow them to support the positive changes that are being accomplished for women in their household and their community.

From both the September 2018 and January 2019 monitoring visits it is evident that the leadership of the group plays a significant role in its success. From observations it seems that the groups with strong leaders seem more energized and have higher income returns than those where leadership is less pronounced.

In terms of what is next for the groups, for the duration of the project, CARE have been liaising with the DFAT funded Tonga Skills program in order to link their training and skills development to the women's groups. To date this has eventuated in some sewing machine training with more training planned for 2019. Additionally, it is hoped that these women's groups can be incorporated into MORDI's long-term community development and agriculture program.

SECTION 4: Detailed Outcomes for each Women's Group

District Officer, Sisifa Fili Interview, September 2018

The District Officer was unable to be interviewed during the January 2019 end of project visit as she was overseas. However, during the September 2018 she stated that when the materials arrived the groups were excited. She reported that activities have increased the spirit of women working together as well as some projects improving their diet. Particularly for those who were working on some form of gardening, the District Officer felt that vegetables were now more accessible to all and people were less dependent on Tongatapu for procuring vegetables. The District Officer stated, *"Our diet is not good but now we have vegetables, we know how good it is for our health"*.



Photo Caption: Sisifa Fili, District Officer, 'Eua, May 2018
Photos: Charlie Damon, CARE

The District Officer noted that whilst there were savings groups on 'Eua before, they hadn't had projects that supported income generation and that she could see the potential for some blocks to extend this to a loans scheme (in case of emergency or for development projects).

In terms of challenges, she noted that some groups still lacked leadership. Successes however included that activities were *"lightening up the spirit of the women"* and that when women were seen to be working, men worked in collaboration with them too (for example, men did the planting of seeds). She also felt that the groups helped as a channel for information sharing, including disaster preparedness messages. Some groups are also looking at securing seeds from MORDI and / or the Ministry of Agriculture for self-sustainability of the vegetable gardens.

*"This project has
lightened the spirit of
the women"*

Sisifa Fili, District Officer, 'Eua,
September 2018

The District Officer stated that women's groups, with the support of civil society actors like MORDI and CARE were the first responders after the cyclone and that the government had failed them *"instead of government politicking, they should deal with the life of the people."*

The District Officer also stated, *"My little voice [as the sole female District Officer in Tonga] can thread big things"*.¹³

¹³ CARE Australia 'Women Lead in Emergencies Pilot, Monitoring Visit Report' September 2018, Page 7

Block 1

The Block 1 women's group are made up of 29 members aged 29 – 74 years old. The women's group received gardening and cooking equipment.

Block 1 are using their equipment for a 'loan' scheme where they hire the equipment out to community members from their block for set prices. For anyone who does not have money, they let them borrow the equipment for free.

Block 1 had a pre-existing bank account which was dormant but have re-established using this account using funds generated from the equipment hire scheme.

Before the cyclone, this group didn't work together on agriculture. Women were more focussed on working on agriculture at a household level. This was an issue for those who did not have a fence as they had to walk to their bush plantation.

Lolohea Vaka (Chair of Block 1 women's group) outlined the importance of training for gardening noting that, *"Traditional knowledge must be complemented by additional learning"*.¹⁴

"Participating in this women project allows me to feel comfortable seeking [asking] neighbours and members of the group for water assistance."

Female endline survey respondent, Block 1, January 2019

Block 2

The Block 2 group comprises 20+ women aged 21-70. They received gardening and cooking equipment as well as a sewing machine. They were using their materials for a 'loan' scheme (the same as block 1) as well as using it to conduct community clean-up work for which they were paid by the Government. By the end of September 2018, they had already made TOP 600.¹⁵

The money raised so far is being saved to spend on maintenance for the donated items. The group is meeting monthly and discusses their work together and plans their activities. Records of these discussions are kept by the Secretary.

During the time of distribution, the 'Eua Government Representative announced that he was willing to pay women's groups for community clean-up work. The Chair of Block 2 approached him the next day and arranged for this to happen. This shows that whilst it is a small action, this project has already provided a small platform for women to liaise directly with Government. The group does have members with a disability and they attend



Photo Caption: Siu Havili (MORDI) talking with Melape 'Aukamea, Chair of Block 2 women's group, September 2018

Photo: Frederique Lehoux, CARE

¹⁴ CARE Australia 'Women Lead in Emergencies Pilot, Monitoring Visit Report' September 2018, Page 7

¹⁵ CARE Australia 'Women Lead in Emergencies Pilot, Monitoring Visit Report' September 2018, Page 8

activities with their carer. This does not seem to be across all groups though so is a potential area to look further into and support groups with moving forward.

Melape reports that men are happy as women are able to stand up for themselves and are not dependant on men anymore. She stated, *“Our husbands love the group as they get the food and say that we, women, are less dependent on them”*.

“The materials distributed have provided motivation for the women to work together”

Melape 'Aukamea, Chair, Block 2, September 2018

This group appeared to be one of the stronger of the groups (on account of its strong leader, who reported she needs to energize the group as not every woman is active) and it will be interesting to see their journey over the course of the next year. Melape stated, *“women have lots of thoughts [ideas] for the group.” “The materials distributed have provided motivation for the women to work together”*.

As of January 2019, this group was looking at re-planting their vegetable garden.

“Our husbands love the group as they get food and say that we, women, are less dependent on them”

Melape 'Aukamea, Chair of Block 2 women's group, September 2018

Block 3

Block 3 has 23 women members aged 21- 71. They received equipment to create a women's gardening plot. Land was given to the group by a male community member. The group does not have to pay for this land but will give vegetables from the garden to the land owner. The group currently meets every evening as they are working in the garden and they review their income on a monthly basis. Future income will be used for maintenance and water bills with the remaining income divided between members.

As of end September 2018, the group has made TOP 200 from the sale of vegetables and the hire of gardening equipment (with a set price list). These funds were used to purchase more fencing wire and seedlings. The group also paid the Tonga Water Board to install a tap in the garden.

By January 2019, this group had fully planted and harvested their vegetables. Vegetables included tomatoes, beans, cucumber, carrot, lettuce and capsicum. Some of the vegetables had been sold on the market, some had been distributed to group members and the remaining produce had been given to other members of the community, targeting the elderly.



Photo Caption: Block 3 gardening plot, September 2018
Photo: Frederique Lehoux, CARE

For those group members who sold the produce they made TOP 80-100 each. The group plan on continuing working together and will re-plough the garden and plant more seeds.

"We feel happy. We now have time with other women. Before we were just at home working on our own. Now [through the project] we have the garden, we work together and we can meet and talk and share. Our children are happy to come and help and we are sharing the vegetables with other neighbours"

Longolivi Takai, Secretary, Block 3, January 2019

CASE STUDY: TC Gita Response, Tonga

Women Lead in Emergencies Pilot Women's Gardening together in Block 3 'Ohonua, 'Eua island, Tonga January 2019

Silvia Tuai, is 46 years old and the Chair of Block 3. Silia is married with one son aged 15 years old. Silvia works at Ministry of Finance and National Planning and her husband works in agriculture.

Silia says "we are happy [about the project] because it has cut down our expenses by growing and eating our own veggies". "People are healthier, eating fresh vegetables with no chemicals. We can go to the garden and collect fresh vegetables when we need them".

When discussing how well the group works together Silvia says *"If you give me your hand, I will give you my hand"*.

"We are seeing that our children are playing and eating together as they see their mothers working together as a group. The men are also happy to contribute and are happy to see their women working together".

Silia hopes that the women continue to develop activities to support themselves as individuals as well as their household. She states *"some women are really interested in working together in our group. Therefore they want to contribute time as well as funds to support maintenance"*.

Silia's home was affected by TC Gita and she says her family was frightened. For this cyclone season however, through their experience of TC Gita and through working on this project they are feeling more prepared. *"We receive warnings that cyclones are coming from the radio, internet, the Red Cross and our Town Officer. Before we ignore the cyclone warnings. How we know what to do"*.



Photo Caption: Silvia Tuai, Chair, Block 3 women's group January 2019
Photo: Charlie Damon, CARE



Photo Caption: Longolivi Takai, Secretary, Block 3 women's group January 2019

Longolivi Takai, aged 49 is the Secretary for the Block 3 women's group. Longolivi is married with 7 children (6 boys and 1 girl aged from 6 – 21 years old). Longolivi is a Finance Officer at the Agriculture College for the Wesleyan Church.

"We feel happy. We now have time with other women. Before we were just at home working on our own. Now [through the project] we have the garden, we work together and we can meet and talk and share. Our children are happy to come and help and we are sharing the vegetables with other neighbours".

Longolivi hopes the group will continue working together. *"It would be good to keep it going, to get together and share. It's good for us and it's good for others. We would also like to expand our group – it's fun."*

When asked about how Longolivi feels about this year's cyclone season she says *"I feel we are ready for the next cyclone. Don't look back. Just look forward, work together, support other women and keep busy. We can't just sit and wait but we do what we can for our family"*.

Block 4

The Block 4 women's group comprises of 32 members aged 20 – 65. They received gardening materials which they have used to create 3 gardens. They are using any money from the sale of vegetables and rental of tools to deposit into their group bank account. They also pay TOP 2 each every time they meet. As at the end of September 2018 they had raised TOP 400 which they planned to use for maintaining their materials and to pay for cleaning up the community.

The group meets on the last Friday of every month to discuss action planning for the next month. They reportedly have not had any problems as a group so far and Simainia stated that the men like the work the women are doing as it is helping the men in their work.

"[The project] helped me know more about how to grow vegetables and eat healthy"

Female endline survey respondent, Block 4, January 2019

"Because women have led everything, this project worked clearly and help every parts in the community"

Male endline survey respondent, Block 4, January 2019

Block 5

Block 5 is a group made up of 30 members aged 18 -70. They received materials to develop a women's gardening plot. They have decided to create 2 gardens – one at the top of the hill and one at the bottom – to increase access for all group members. Both gardens are at a different planting phase which means the harvest will be staggered and they are using seedlings from one plot for the other.

This group plans to raise funds through the sale of vegetables and through the hire of tools to their group members. Group 5 is meeting monthly and organised a 'clean community' competition in October 2018 to increase the motivation of group members as well as engage men. The District Officer noted *"We already see the results"*. This competition is a new idea and all blocks participated. The District Officer (who is a member of this group) hopes that this will become a monthly event with no physical prize just the pride that your block has won.

In terms of learning, this block notes that receiving agricultural training at the same time as their distributions would have been beneficial, particularly training in how to deter chickens who ate all the seeds that were first planted. The District Officer stated *"Harvest comes slowly, we have to be patient."*¹⁶

During the endline survey, one male respondent from Block 5 stated that an impact from this project is that *"I get more help with decision making"*.



Photo Caption: The District Officer and her son in one of the gardening plots from Block 5, September 2018
Photo: Charlie Damon, CARE

¹⁶ CARE Australia 'Women Lead in Emergencies Pilot, Monitoring Visit Report' September 2018, Page 10

Block 6

The Block 6 women's group has 30 members aged 20 – 50+. They received materials to create a women's garden and created two plots with the plan of having a staggered harvest. One of the gardens has been really successful but the other has had a continued challenge of chickens eating all the seedlings and produce (except carrots as they are in the ground).



Photo Caption: Pepe Haven, Chair of Block 6 women's group with Charlie Damon, CARE, September 2018

Photo: Frederique Lehoux, CARE

Since starting this project, the group has opened a bank account to deposit any funds raised through the project. The group meets formally once a month but work in the garden together on a daily basis. This project has increased their activity as a community though they still find it a challenge to motivate everyone and during January 2019 consultations noted that they had 8 women that were the most regular.

When interviewing Pepe Haven, Chair of Block 6 in September 2018 there was a sense of energy, hope and expectation. During this visit Pepe stated that *"the women feel less lazy, are working in the garden instead of sleeping and feel healthier. The work is good for our minds"*. When asked what her dream was for the group Pepe said *"I hope that by this time next year we have our own market stall right here"*, and she pointed to the ground in front of the garden.

"The women feel less lazy, are working in the garden instead of sleeping and feel healthier. The work is good for our minds".

Pepe Haven, Chair of Block 6 Women's group, September 2018



Photo Caption: Pepe Haven, Chair of Block 6 women's group (far right) with members of the Block 6 women's group, January 2019

Photo: Charlie Damon, CARE

By January 2019, Pepe was visibly disheartened by the second garden being continually destroyed by chickens. However when talking with Pepe and other members of the Block 6 women's group the women stated that despite one of the gardens having its challenges, they had a second garden that had plenty of produce and it was positive that they did not have to buy vegetables from the market. The produce from the garden was distributed amongst group members and any excess was distributed to other community members. Group members used the produce for sale or consumption. One group member stated, *"After the first sale of produce it felt good. Like I can achieve something."*

For the garden that has been successful they are currently re-planting the garden. For the garden that hasn't been so successful they are looking at planting in-ground crops only such as carrots, onions and potatoes.

The women go to the garden every day. *"When women come together things happen and the dream comes true"* states Pepe Haven, Chair of the Block 6 women's group.

One woman stated *“the tools [that CARE and MORDI distributed] really helped us. We can borrow them and then bring them back”*. Another woman stated *“I feel happy. I am in the garden every day. Children come and help with the watering and keeping it clean. Men are happy that women are active. The project has built a spirit of oneness. It has built a sense of confidence that we can work for ourselves and has brought the idea of self-reliance”*.

“The project has built a spirit of oneness. It has built a sense of confidence that we can work for ourselves and has brought the idea of self-reliance”.

Women’s Representative, Block 6, January 2019

Endline survey respondents noted that the project has led to an increase in vegetable consumption due to affordability and an opportunity to get to know other women in the community. One Block 6 female endline survey respondent also noted *“ We work together and equally share what is given. Our homes are cleaner than before and we use wisely what has been given”*.

Block 7

The women’s group in block 7 have 30+ members aged from 18 -75. They received gardening and sewing materials through which they raise funds by renting them out. They also are able to rent out the lawnmower with labour and have 2 men that they employ to do this.

This group meets once a month and has its own bank account. During their monthly meetings they plan how to raise an income.

As of January 2019, the group had raised TOP 200. They are planning to use that income for maintenance and parts for equipment as well as the purchase of a second mower. *“Having this equipment helps women who do not have access to equipment such as lawnmowers”* stated Sela Talanoa, Chair of the Block 7 women’s group.

The group meets once a month. Prior to this project they did not have women’s group meetings. *“This project offers an incentive and attracts them to come together”* stated Sela. At meetings they discuss what they need in their home, their plans and how they can work together to help other families”.

Lupe Takalu is the second secretary for the group. Lupe is 49 years old and married with 2 boys aged 10 and 12. Lupe helps organise the group meetings. Lupe states *“it feels good when we get together.”*

During the endline survey, one Block 7 male respondent noted *“We got to eat vegetables that I couldn’t afford to buy”*.



*Photo Caption: Sela Talanoa, Chair, Block 7 women’s group January 2019
Photo: Charlie Damon, CARE*

SECTION 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

What this project has demonstrated is that it is possible to implement women led activities as part of humanitarian responses and make an immediate impact. The best case scenario is that these build on existing programs and then are absorbed into longer term programs, but in the case of Tonga, immediate positive impacts were felt despite this not being the case.

This project demonstrated that women had increased confidence, increased access to Government decision makers as well as improved division of labour in the household and community.

There are some key learnings to be drawn from this pilot project for consideration for others wanting to adopt this approach:

1. Short-term inputs can make a difference

This project had demonstrated positive impact for those women and men involved. However, due to limitations of time and project funding, this pilot was not able to make use of best practice e.g. building on existing programs, allowing adequate time for activities which would significantly increase benefits and support lasting change. However, despite this, this project had demonstrated positive impact for those women and men involved.

2. Timing of support to Women's Groups

The premise of the support to women's groups included the promotion of shared and collaborative ideas that would support all active women in the groups. However, many of the women were still struggling to meet their basic needs after TC Gita. In initial consultations with these groups in May 2018, they all stated that they needed water tanks as they still did not yet have adequate access to water.

As many studies have shown, all across the world, women's relationship with water is vital and often much more complex than that of men's relationship. Tonga is no different. Women are still primarily responsible for the collection and storage of water at the HH level¹⁷. Communities also share their water with those with limited or no access, therefore when members of the community do not have access to HH drinking water, this is added strain on both those with and those without HH drinking water.

The nature of the program meant focusing on activities that could support communal and collective recovery for all members of the women's group. This, plus limited funds, meant it was not possible to provide HH water tanks. This made it challenging for the CARE and MORDI team to help women to think about 'other' activities they might want to engage in to support their own recovery when they were lacking their most basic needs.

3. Women Lead in Emergencies must be conducted alongside other response activities

Related to the above point, WLIE is designed to be funding and activities specifically for women's participation and leadership BUT we recommend that WLIE is only done alongside other emergency response and livelihood activities to ensure it is part of a comprehensive response package. This is particularly important in emergency response given the focus on meeting basic needs but is also supported by the evidence on most effective approaches to women's empowerment in development contexts too i.e. that multidimensional programmes that combine activities to increase women's economic, political and social power work best.

¹⁷ CARE Rapid Gender Analysis

4. Work with existing women's groups and structures

Where possible, WLiE projects should work with existing groups and structures, even if they are dormant. Even in a short term project, the chances of benefits out living project activities are far greater if working with existing women's groups, whether these are faith-based, self-help, solidarity, whatever and are also more sustainable.

5. Provide ongoing support to women's groups

Ideally, response projects should be based on existing programs and be absorbed into long terms programs at the end of response projects. This can therefore strengthen groups and increase their sustainability particularly in building skills and confidence of women to meaningfully engage in development planning and processes.

6. Provide or facilitate technical support to enable more involvement of women with disabilities

This project had a few women with disabilities but not in every group. As part of project set-up, Disabled Peoples Organisations (DPOs) should be engaged to support women's groups identify women with disabilities and create an enabling environment for their participation. Additionally, staff employed to implement this project also need to be sensitised to the importance of engaging women with disabilities and working alongside DPOs to enable this to happen.

7. Men and boys engagement strategies

Any project that is working with women to rethink gender norms, role and responsibilities has to engage men. This includes husbands, male leaders in the community and other male decision makers. Strategies to positively engage men will lead to their support for the project or the approach and potentially lead to them becoming champions of women led activities and increased women's leadership in their community, as well as reduce the possibility of them being a barrier to project progress.

8. Dedicated staff who are committed to gender equality

To implement this kind of project requires dedicated staff. Staff to facilitate discussions, mobilise inputs, liaise and link with other partners and service providers, provide ongoing mentoring support and to monitor activity implementation. This project was able to build on an existing strong network via one staff member but had difficulty recruiting additional staff for the project. This led to the work load, stress and responsibility being placed on one person.

Additionally, staff need to have the necessary commitment to gender equality or requisite understanding or skills to foster gender equality.

SECTION 6: Annexes

6.1 Rapid Gender Analysis



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Document