



Banking on gender-equitable, rights-based and participatory adaptation to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable to climate change impacts

CARE International submission to the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body for Implementation in-session workshop on gender-responsive climate policy with a focus on adaptation and capacity-building¹

Recommendations for global policymakers and donors

1. Promote the inclusion of gender-equitable community-based adaptation (CBA) strategies in government climate-change plans, budgets, policies and programs at local, national and international levels, and the policies of financial mechanisms and institutions including the Green Climate Fund.
2. Make efforts to change the narrative around women and climate change from one of a perspective of women as the most vulnerable and victims of climate change to one that recognises the differential vulnerability of men and women but also sees women as agents of change and valuable contributors to the solutions to address climate change.
3. Invest in context-specific analysis to understand the interconnected factors shaping adaptive capacity in order to design effective and appropriate adaptation action.
4. Invest in improving women's economic empowerment in the face of climate change to address the way resources and labour are distributed and valued in the economy.
5. Invest in addressing the unequal access to information and information communication technologies (ICT), through capacity-building and education to enhance women's literacy which is a critical driver of change in gender relations and adaptive capacity.
6. Invest in comprehensive monitoring and evaluation across all levels of programme and policy action which goes beyond disaggregation of data but actually measures changes in gender dynamics and women's adaptive capacity.

Recommendations for national policymakers

1. Build on and promote the application of the principles of CBA to national adaptation planning, budgeting, implementation and evaluation.
2. Address social inequalities and differential vulnerability in national adaptation planning and budgeting. Specific attention must be dedicated to gender, alongside other factors (age, disability, wealth, ethnicity).
3. Mainstream gender equality in climate change policies, programs, guidelines and training materials by integrating gender objectives, targets and indicators. Involve gender experts, women leaders and women community representatives in such processes.
4. Strengthen multi-stakeholder collaboration (civil society networks and platforms, relevant ministries, community based organizations) to enable sharing, understanding, interpreting and communicating of climate information and providing a space for dialogue on national & local adaptation issues/ options.

Recommendations at local level

1. Ensure that adaptation planning is led by affected communities and promote gender-equitable, rights-based and participatory action.
2. Conduct gender and power analysis prior to adaptation planning and budgeting to ensure a good understanding of the different levels of knowledge, skills, power relations and capacities among and between men and women. Ensure that such analysis includes an understanding of the drivers of and barriers to change in gender roles and relations - how power dynamics are shifting due to the pressures and stresses of climate change and other factors over time.
3. Ensure that gender is mainstreamed at all stages of the CBA project cycle. Tailor CBA methods and tools to the local context and climate to ensure that they respond to gender dynamics and the realities of change, risk and uncertainty.

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4. Monitor and document gender achievements and changes in gender dynamics in CBA projects to generate critical knowledge and evidence, which can be used to advocate for and contribute to an enabling environment for gender CBA policy at community, local, national and global levels.

Introduction

CARE International welcomes the opportunity to submit to the Subsidiary Body's consultation and appreciates the focus of the May 2016's in-session workshop on gender-responsive adaptation action. From CARE's perspective, climate change is one of the greatest injustices of our time as people living in poverty all over the world, who have done the least to contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, are worst affected by climate change impacts.

Poor and marginalised women and men face multiple and complex challenges – with insecure livelihoods, conflict, natural disasters and the degradation of natural resources exacerbating and reinforcing poverty and marginalisation. Climate change is now undermining already fragile ecosystems and livelihoods, and changing natural disaster patterns – leading to competition for and conflicts over resources, and jeopardising development gains. Unequal distribution of resources and power imbalances in the home and the community are at the root of poverty and marginalisation for women and men. The capacity to adapt to climate change and the changing dynamics between women and men interact and overlap because both are shaped by the distribution of resources and power between different social groups.

While women produce 60–80% of the food in developing countries, worldwide they only own 10–20% of agricultural land². Rural women are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to limited access and control over resources fundamental to adaptation and limited participation in decision-making processes. Similarly, they lack equal access to productive resources needed for agricultural livelihoods, and are often the last to eat when food is scarce. However, women should not be viewed only as victims or as “the vulnerable”; they have valuable skills and knowledge that contribute to successful adaptation and play a key role in ensuring the food and nutrition security of their households and communities.

Through its work with communities and local authorities, CARE aims to generate transformational, systemic change in gender relations and go beyond simply taking into account differentiated impacts of climate change on women, men, boys and girls as well as gender roles and norms. It implies creating dialogue and platforms to critically evaluate the fairness and renegotiate gender roles and norms, as well as addressing structural barriers to gender equality in policies and practices (discriminatory laws and customs or socially engrained beliefs that constrain the roles and opportunities of women and men) in the context of action on climate change. Responding to climate change while ambitiously tackling gender inequalities requires committed leadership and communities' buy-in.

In addition, the 2015 international policy agreements constitute a clarion call for action to increase efforts for the promotion of gender equality. Sustainable Development Goal Nr. 5 reflects all governments' commitments to achieve gender equality, The Paris Agreement states that when Parties undertake climate change action they should “respect and promote gender equality, empowerment of women” , while the Sendai DRR framework sees empowerment of women as key.

Gender dynamics, climate change and adaptive capacity

On the one hand, climate change affects different communities, households and individuals in multiple ways. On the other hand, women's and men's roles, aspirations, access to and control over resources, and influence over decision-making play a strong role in determining social power relations, usually to the detriment of girls' and women's life chances. In societies where people are discriminated against based on gender, ethnicity, class, or caste, being a man or woman is often a decisive factor in determining the levels of risk they face from climatic shocks, extreme and uncertain weather, and changes in the environment and economy.

² FAO (2015) Why gender: Key facts. Rome <http://www.fao.org/gender/gender-home/gender-why/key-facts/en/>

One's ability to act in response to, and in anticipation of, climate change involves having access to and use of information and services, control over assets, access to institutions and entitlements to key resources, the ability to innovate in response to evolving challenges and opportunities, and the flexibility and foresight in planning and decision-making. Such resources and options are strongly dependent on gender norms and expectations which can be extremely discriminatory and limiting.

The better our understanding of how gender dynamics influence people's vulnerability to climatic and other changes, and what options they have to deal with these changes, the more successfully we can target groups and action, locally, nationally and across sectors when supporting vulnerable communities' adaptation to climate change. CARE's experience shows that every livelihood -farming, fishing or trading- has a gender dimension specific to its culture and context. Women's often-limited sphere of influence over adaptation decisions and their widespread lack of power over valued livelihoods resources must be acknowledged but also actively addressed by development initiatives.

However, it is important to note that gender dynamics change over time – women and men have many different roles in their lives, including as spouses, siblings, co-workers and parents. In each role, women and men may act together or separately depending on their own concerns. Interventions to address gender inequality must be based on a nuanced picture of these complex gender relations and the drivers of change to avoid creating greater inequality, or even conflict, between social groups.

Promoting gender equality through community-based adaptation

Community-based adaptation focuses on building adaptive capacity, addressing the underlying (structural, social, economic and political) causes of vulnerability and developing community-led responses to climate change. It does so by combining participatory decision-making processes that involve men and women, together and as different groups, with support to technical adaptation strategies or interventions, informed by climate science forecasts and projections, climate risk and impact analysis, and the designing of 'climate-resilient' livelihoods and disaster risk reduction interventions. CBA builds on sustainable development by adding climate change analysis, which considers different timescales and decision-making and is informed by anticipated future weather and climate. It enables the most vulnerable socio-economic groups to take practical action to adapt to climate change and raise their voices in local, national and international planning and policymaking processes.

CARE's experience indicates that analysis of differences in roles, power and resources, plus a targeted approach to promoting improved gender equality as part of adaptive capacity-building, produces beneficial outcomes in women's empowerment, household and community capacity to adapt, and increased food and nutrition security. Valuing and strengthening women's voices, aspirations, access to and control over resources, and influence in decision-making require action in all phases of a community-based adaptation initiative: from analysis to design, from implementation to monitoring and evaluation. CARE has developed a comprehensive set of gender-responsive approaches to climate vulnerability and capacity assessment, including:

Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA) is a well-established approach for helping communities and practitioners to jointly analyze vulnerability and capacity to adapt to climate change so as to identify appropriate adaptation responses for vulnerable people. The CVCA builds primarily on local knowledge about climate risks and adaptation strategies but also provides opportunities to link community knowledge to available scientific and technical information (about water resources, agriculture, market trends, etc) to yield greater understanding about local impacts of climate change.

A crucial task for integrating gender into CBA is to ensure that those engaged in the community-level process have a good understanding of local gender dynamics and inequalities. A gender-sensitive CVCA ensures women's and men's participation and also asks questions about gender issues in relation to climate vulnerability and adaptive capacity. If facilitated appropriately, the analysis process itself can be the first step in building the adaptive capacity of local stakeholders.

Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP) provides a simple means of collectively understanding and using forecasts to help overcome the challenges of changing climatic patterns (shorter rainfall seasons, shifting of the times when rains start) and extreme events (flooding, extended drought periods). The PSP method creates space for meteorologists, community members, local government departments, researchers and NGOs to consider the probabilities of changes in the climate, assess their likely hazards, risks, opportunities and impacts, and develop scenarios based on such an assessment. They discuss the potential implications of these scenarios on livelihoods, which lead to agreement on plans and a range of options that respond adequately to the identified levels of risk and uncertainty (for instance, deciding which type and volume of crops to plant in the coming season). PSP has also contributed to some important changes in gender dynamics.

The CARE's Adaptation Learning Programme (ALP) which has been working with 40 communities in Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique and Niger since 2010 to build the capacity of vulnerable households to adapt to climate change, has held PSP workshops twice a year in Kenya, and annually in Ghana and Niger. The workshops have created a space for dialogue between women and men in a community, between communities and local government, and with meteorological staff. As women are engaged in climate risk analysis, their priorities and adaptation issues are shared in their communities and at higher levels, ensuring that adaptation interventions enhance women's adaptive capacity.



Women from Dan Maza Idi village discuss climate change impacts and plan adaptation
Credit: Awaiss Yahaya/CARE 2010.

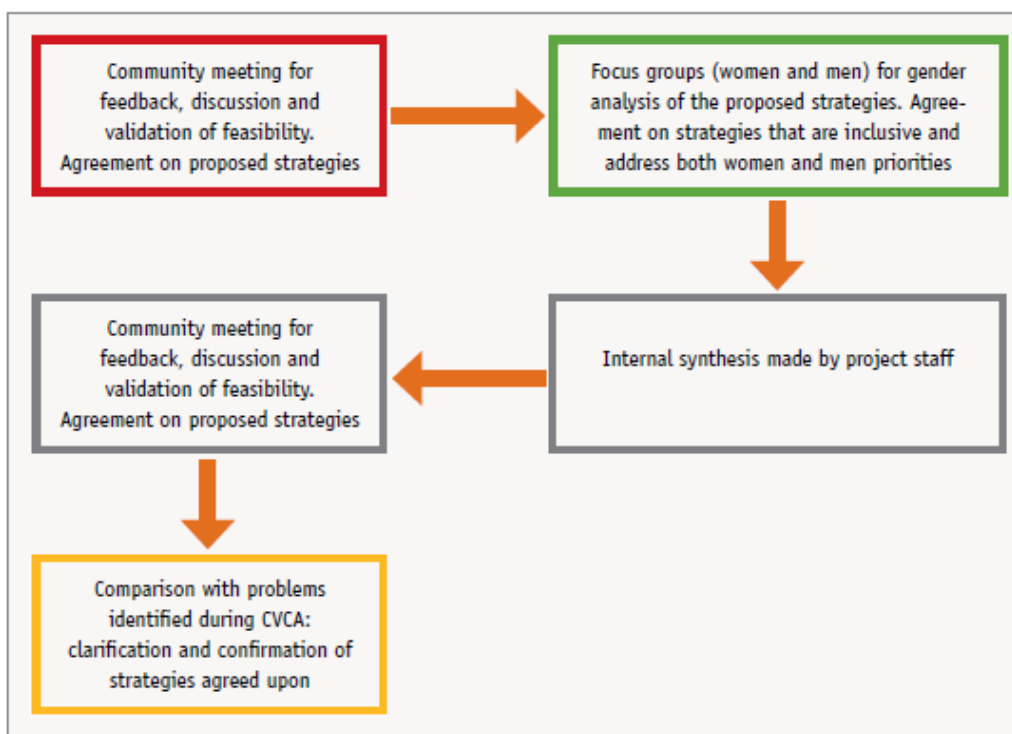
Community adaptation action plans (CAAP) that allow men, women and communities to prioritize risk and make collective decisions on new or improved actions they can take to build household or community resilience to the impacts of climate change. These plans also include advocacy activities to lobby local government for resources/services needed for effective adaptation. There are three main steps in the CAAP process:

1. Preparation, training and collecting baseline data: Involves conducting a baseline study including interviews with several community focus groups (men / women / young people), and using participatory appraisal tools and individual household questionnaires to understand how community members perceive climate change, its impact on their daily lives and their existing coping mechanisms. An institutional analysis is also carried to map the relevant actors, institutions and programs within the enabling environment, e.g. national government policies, market systems and services, civil society partners, etc.
2. Participatory planning and identifying priorities for adaptation strategies: Involves a thorough participatory analysis of the causes of vulnerability, through in-depth community discussions, enabled communities to identify and prioritize some adaptation strategies. Both a feasibility analysis and a gender analysis are conducted. Parallel discussions are facilitated with gender equality-based focus groups to ensure the representative inclusion of the priorities of men, women and young people alike.

3. Implementing community adaptation action plans: Each community comes to an agreement about the main strategies suitable for both women and men to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The strategies are documented and transcribed on to large flipchart papers using agreed local symbols. This helped to share and communicate the plans to the entire community and ensured local understanding and ownership. In fact, most women and men are now able to explain the rationale and content of their CAAP and are systematically reviewing their progress and plans annually – at the time of the seasonal rain forecast.

Piloted by CARE in Niger in 1991, the [Village Savings and Loans Associations \(VSLAs\)](#) model has proven to be an effective platform for women’s economic empowerment at community level. VSLAs differ from micro-finance, as they are self-selected, informal savings-led groups that allow members to save flexibly. A group meets each week to deposit money; the accumulated funds are then used to finance small loans. Members can take out loans to invest in small businesses or diversify away from climate-sensitive livelihoods, or they can draw on a social fund to cope with unexpected events. There is a strong representation of women in the VLSAs: for example, in the Ghanaian and Kenyan communities where ALP is working 90% of members are women. This simple banking system can have a dramatic effect on people’s ability to invest in income-

Figure 5: The CAAP process



generating enterprises and to cope with erratic cash flows. VSLAs give participants more financial security to manage the risks associated with climate uncertainty. They boost women’s self-esteem and influence in a community. VSLAs have given women the opportunity to prove they can handle and use money effectively, empowering them economically and socially. Combining VSLAs with institutional capacity-building, appropriate agricultural training and access to climate information is particularly empowering for women, who are now diversifying into a range of new economic opportunities. Diverse economic opportunities, and the associated greater respect and collaboration with husbands, improve women’s adaptive capacity.

Appropriate agricultural training and participatory teaching methods which are adapted to adult learning needs, particularly those of women, contribute to greater respect for women’s abilities as farmers. One of these interventions is the Farmer Field School (FFS) that farmers can visit on a regular basis and where they can experiment different farming techniques and crop varieties. This allows them to observe and analyse how and why different outcomes are generated, and so be able to make informed decisions about farming techniques. In Jawani, Ghana, many women have learned new agricultural practices from community meetings led by ALP and our local partners. This has resulted in community-wide acceptance that women’s farming contributes to improved household food security and increased household incomes.

Increased access to communication and mobile technologies through the expansion of cellular services and radio has a great potential to improve women's ability to adapt to climate change impacts. In some parts of the world, mobile phones can empower rural women, compensating for their restricted physical mobility, giving them access to information, and strengthening their social networks. ALP has promoted communication technologies for women through mobile phones and radios, with mobile phones being used to access and share climate information. In Niger, some women have used savings from the VSLA to buy solar kits for recharging mobile phones. The payments they receive for a mobile phone charging service provide extra family income. The ability to charge mobile phones also means that people can share weather forecasts and early disaster warnings more regularly and easily. However, women's lower levels of literacy, their restricted access to technology (like mobile phones and radios) and their workloads limit their ability to make use of these new sources of information.

Integrating gender into national adaptation planning

Addressing social inequalities and differences in vulnerability must be a key concern all along the national adaptation planning process. In order to be equitable and address one of the key underlying causes of climate vulnerability, adaptation planning needs to commit to gender equality and promote gender-equitable, rights-based and participatory action. This includes:

- i. promoting gender equality and increasing women's participation in decision-making, project development, identification and implementation, financial allocation, monitoring and evaluation, and
- ii. ensuring adaptation builds on the strengths of women and men, as well as girls and boys, to ensure that their skills, knowledge, and capacities are used to contribute adequately to climate action

These demands are also reinforced by the provisions of the Paris Agreement, with its preambular provision that when Parties undertake climate change action they should respect and promote "gender equality, empowerment of women", and Article 7.5 highlighting "gender-responsive and participatory" as guiding principles for adaptation action.

List of publications

- ALP (2015) *Gender Dynamics in a Changing Climate: How Gender and Adaptive Capacity Affect Resilience* <http://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Gender-and-Adaptation-Learning-Brief.pdf>
- CARE (2007) *Ideas and Actions: Addressing the Social Factors that Influence Sexual and Reproductive Health* http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/social_analysis_manual.pdf
- CARE (2009) *Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis Handbook*. <http://www.careclimatechange.org/cvca>
- CARE (2011) *Understanding Vulnerability to Climate Change: Insights from Application of CARE's Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA) Methodology*. www.careclimatechange.org/files/adaptation/CARE_Understanding_Vulnerability.pdf
- CARE (2014) *Tackling the Double Injustice of Climate Change and Gender Equality* http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/Double_Injustice.pdf
- CARE (2014) *Community-Based Adaptation in Practice: A Global Overview of CARE International's Practice of Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) to Climate Change* http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/cba_in_practice_lr.pdf
- CARE, Food Tank, CCAFS (2015) *Cultivating Equality: Delivering Just and Sustainable Food Systems in a Changing Climate* http://www.care-international.org/uploaddocument/news/publications/reports%20and%20issue%20briefs/english/cultivating-equality_report.pdf
- CARE (2015) *The Resilience Champions*: <http://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/The-resiliencechampions-report-EN.pdf>
- CARE International in Vietnam and Australian Aid (2015) *Beyond Words, Advancing Gender Equality in Climate Change Policy and Programming in Vietnam* http://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Beyond_Words.pdf
- Daze, Angie (2014) *Using analysis of climate change vulnerability and adaptive capacity for adaptation decision making. Lessons from CARE Ethiopia's experience*. CARE Ethiopia: Addis Ababa.

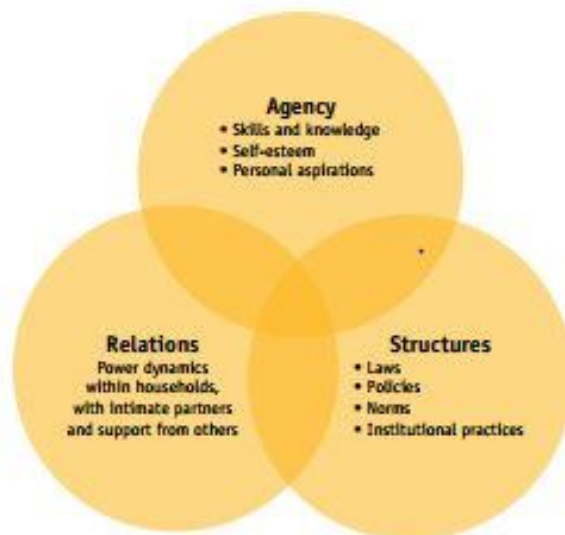
Annex 1 Key aspects of a range of CARE projects implementing a gender approach in community-based adaptation

CBA project	Description and field experience
<p>From research to action: tackling gender inequalities in India</p>	<p><i>The “Where the Rain Falls” project</i> has conducted an in depth gender equality assessment resulting in a CBA project focused on increasing the resilience of adivasi (tribal) women to climate change and other stresses in 20 villages in the Jashpur District of Chhattisgarh. As a result of engaging women and providing training on their rights, under various government programmes and policies, local governance meetings witnessed up to five times greater participation from adivasi women, when compared to baseline levels. Women raised several local issues vocally and by submitting written applications, including those related to availability of water and other resources.</p> <p>Website: http://wheretherainfalls.org/india/ Project factsheet: http://wheretherainfalls.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/WtRF-PROJECT-FACT-SHEET-INDIA.pdf</p>
<p>Building resilience whilst addressing gender inequality through community based adaptation in Kenya, Ghana, Niger and Mozambique</p>	<p><i>The Adaptation Learning Programme (ALP) for Africa</i> implements a number of programme interventions aimed at addressing gender equality whilst building the adaptive capacity of both men and women in Ghana, Niger, Kenya and Mozambique. Following on from a climate vulnerability and capacity assessment (CVCA), which is carried out with a gender lens (and often supplemented with an in-depth standalone gender analysis) ALP aims to address some of the issues raised in the analysis through supporting VSLAs, PSP, farmer field and business field schools as well as community adaptation action plans.</p> <p>These approaches have resulted in new respect and support for women’s roles and their contribution to the household. An example is men giving women access to land now they realize women are economically and technically able to make good use of it through access to credit (through VSLAs), seasonal forecasts and improved agricultural inputs and practices. Women’s diversification into less ‘climate sensitive’ livelihoods such as handicrafts or petty trading using funds saved in VSLAs. Greater social empowerment for women – VSLAs build group solidarity and promote self-confidence and self-reliance that fosters changes in women’s behaviour. For example, they have an increased voice in decision-making processes, making household decisions collaboratively with men, access to public spaces and use of mobile phones.</p> <p>Website: http://careclimatechange.org/our-work/alp/</p>
<p>Banking on financial inclusion to empower women and strengthen the resilience of communities in Ethiopia</p>	<p><i>The Graduation with Resilience to Achieve sustainable Development project (GRAD)</i> implemented by a CARE Ethiopia-led consortium aims, through climate-resilient approaches, to support households in diversifying their livelihoods, building assets and linking them to financial services and markets.</p> <p>The project is driving an innovative approach to the development of collective organisations, building on local traditions, to establish Village Economic and Social Associations (VESAs). VESAs are the focal point for many project interventions and provide an inclusive environment for building the knowledge and capacities of women and men in savings and credit, financial literacy, small business planning/management, and other economic skills. VESAs receive orientation and training in risk management, women’s participation and empowerment, and adaptation to climate change. Households are also assisted to access longer-term agricultural loans from formal microfinance institutions (MFIs). The project also uses the CARE’s Social Analysis and Action (SAA) tool. Originally designed for sexual and reproductive health initiatives, the SAA has been adapted to address the underlying drivers of vulnerability to climate change. It is used to identify social and cultural constraints to food security, such as gendered division of labour and household-level decision-making around access to, and control over, assets.</p> <p>Although men and women are equally welcome to join VESAs, the impacts</p>

	<p>on women can be quite significant. For many women, this is their first access to savings and credit opportunities in a safe and accessible location, the first opportunity to use credit for their own income generating activities and a stepping-stone to engage with formal MFIs. In many cases, the VESA meeting is the first opportunity for women to interact with men (or wives with husbands) within formal organizations and has very positive impacts on gender roles and relationships. Serving as officers in groups with male members (including their husbands) can be particularly empowering for women. Group cohesion and trust facilitates discussions leading to positive change in social and cultural norms that are harmful to women and girls and actually impede graduation to food security at the household level.</p> <p>Project factsheet: http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/GRAD-Brief_0.pdf Learning brief: http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/GRAD%20Learning%20Brief%20%233%20VESAs.pdf</p>
<p><i>Raising awareness on women's right to land in Niger to better cope with climate change impacts</i></p>	<p><i>The Women and Land Initiative</i> in the Maradi region of Niger, working in 30 communities in southern Maradi, has been working to raise awareness and secure support from local, traditional, state and religious authorities for women to exercise their rights to inherit land, and to buy or lease land, under the Niger Land Act. Although national and religious laws formally give women land rights, weak and sometimes contradictory application of laws and rights adds to the problem. The project has contributed to increasing the representation of women on local land committees from 10% to 20%. The land committees, and supportive local leaders, and especially religious leaders, now advise on the advantages of gender-balanced control over land. Advantages include better abilities to cope with the impacts of the longer and more frequent droughts as a result of climate change.</p> <p>Report: http://www.care.dk/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/IFETE_Rapport_FINAL_low.pdf</p>

Annex 2 CARE's Gender Approach

CARE's focus on gender equality stems from a firm commitment to facilitating the realisation of women's human rights as a goal in itself. So, as a rights-based organisation, CARE is committed to promoting gender equality as a crosscutting component in all of our work. Furthermore, the valuable contributions that our projects make to women's lives – the health, security, economic or political gains that we help women to achieve – can be quickly reversed unless there are deeper changes in the structures, rules and power relations that define how a society allocates resources among citizens. No individual measure of change can be sustained if it is not grounded in women's empowerment. CARE defines women's empowerment as the sum total of changes needed for a woman to realise her full human rights.



The interplay of these changes lies in three dimensions:

- **agency:** her own aspirations and capabilities
- **structures:** the environment that surrounds and conditions her choices
- **relations:** the power relations through which she negotiates her life choices.