



A DECADE OF IMPACT IN COCOA COMMUNITIES
More than Ten Years of the CARE-Cargill Partnership



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Foreword

Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana grow over 60 percent of the world's cocoa and the sector is of critical economic importance to the region, supporting the livelihoods of an estimated 2,000,000 farmers and agricultural communities.

Cargill has been working in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana for decades and launched the Cargill Cocoa Promise in 2012 – Cargill's commitment to enable farmers and their communities to achieve better incomes and living standards. We've been able to take a long-term approach to investing in cocoa growing communities and playing our role in the development of the sector.

In our 2019 Cargill Cocoa Promise report, we stated that every year we see the network of stakeholders that are willing to drive change collaboratively continue to expand and deepen, creating a great scale of collective impact. We know that now more than ever we need to craft and develop reciprocal partnerships for more impact and share learnings, make data more openly available, and measure progress together. That's why we are pleased to be sharing the data and results of our decade long collaboration with CARE to drive forward a thriving cocoa sector in West Africa. We are dedicated to creating lasting benefits for cocoa farmers, their families and communities, and we can only do this through sustained, long standing partnerships across the supply chain.

We know there is more to be done. We are now one year into a new three-year phase of collaboration with CARE in the region, building on our successes and amplifying the role of women in the sector. We look forward to the continued impact we can achieve together.

Harold Poelma
President, Cargill Cocoa & Chocolate



Executive Summary

Founded in 1945, [CARE](#) is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty and providing lifesaving assistance in emergencies. In 100 countries around the world, CARE places special focus on working alongside poor girls and women because, equipped with the proper resources, they have the power to help lift whole families and entire communities out of poverty. Cargill is a global food, agricultural, financial, and industrial products company that applies its expertise to serve customers and communities in 70 countries around the world. [Cargill](#) has 155,000 employees working every day to advance its global purpose to nourish the world in a safe, responsible, sustainable way. CARE and Cargill have partnered to improve the lives of rural agricultural communities around the world and specifically since 2008 have reached more than **2.7 million people**, 480,000 people directly and 2.3 million indirectly, through **25 projects** across **11 countries**, including Brazil, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Mali, Nicaragua, India, and Indonesia. Of those reached, over **1.5 million are women**.

[CARE's SuPER principles](#) drive these projects, calling for global foods systems to be *Sustainable, Productive, and Profitable, Equitable, and Resilient* and the projects are also aligned to [Cargill's sustainability](#) priorities, which include a focus on food security and nutrition whilst protecting natural resources. CARE and Cargill's portfolio of projects are

CARE-Cargill Global Program Reach:

11
COUNTRIES

12
YEARS
(2008-2020)

25
PROJECTS

2.7
MILLION PEOPLE REACHED

1.5
MILLION WOMEN REACHED

designed to achieve multiple benefits, including improving agricultural productivity, increasing incomes, and building resilience of small-scale food producers to climate change, all while contributing to women’s empowerment and nutrition.

In **Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana**, CARE and Cargill are partnering to support cocoa sustainability, working in cocoa-growing communities to build better lives for cocoa farmers and their families. The partnership in West Africa focuses on establishing more prosperous, sustainable, and resilient cocoa farming communities through a community development approach that engages communities throughout the entire process. Since 2008, **nine programs** have been implemented in the region to address critical challenges faced by cocoa farming communities, including cocoa production, harmful child labor practices, women’s economic empowerment, access to financial services, nutrition and education. To date, these cocoa development programs have reached **236,589 people**, 62,459 directly and 174,130 indirectly in **323 communities** – of those reached, **111,167 are women**. The partnership is creating change in these communities through the principles and goals established in [CARE’s She Feeds the World framework](#), [the Cargill Cocoa Promise commitment](#), as well as through a participatory development approach that is informed and led by cocoa communities themselves. Read more about the impact our global partnership has achieved in our [Decade of Impact report published](#) in 2018.

CARE and Cargill are committed to measurement and using evidence to achieve more significant impact in its programs. By employing an evidence-based approach to programming, the partnership can hold itself accountable to its goals and understand its impact, lessons learned, and areas needing improvement. **This report examines CARE and Cargill’s work over the last decade in West Africa** to understand where, how, and to what extent this partnership has achieved sustainable impact.¹ This report helps demonstrate how CARE’s [SuPER principles](#) and [She Feeds the World framework](#), as well as the [Cargill Cocoa Promise sustainability goals](#) have been operationalized. It provides evidence of how the partnership has created change for cocoa-growing communities where Cargill’s Cocoa & Chocolate businesses operate.

In Ivorian and Ghanaian cocoa communities, the partnership has helped people access the resources, skills, and tools necessary to change their own lives. Program participants accessed savings and credit structures, increasingly engaged in community development, worked to combat child labor, improved community resilience, enhanced women’s equity, rejected harmful gender norms, and established improved agricultural techniques to increase and diversify nutrition and income. This report demonstrates how CARE and Cargill’s partnership model has created long-lasting impact in cocoa communities, serving as a resource for a broad audience including the cocoa industry, non-profits, civil society, government, among others, to learn from and model their development initiatives after.

A sample selection of **results** from the full Decade of Impact report covering Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana include:

- In Ghana’s **Rural Education Project**, 9,625 cocoa farmers were trained in best agricultural practices. By the end of the project, there was a 25% increase in cocoa yields among project-supported farmers. CARE’s agricultural training package, combined with greater access to extension services and strong market linkage, led to a 29% increase in average farmer income.

¹ This report draws on final evaluations, CARE’s Program Initiatives and Impact Reporting System (PIIRS), and nine program reports between 2008 and 2020. It also uses [CARE’s She Feeds the World program framework](#) and [the Cargill Cocoa Promise](#) guidelines to lay out different elements of CARE and Cargill’s programs.



- In Côte d’Ivoire’s **Support to Cocoa Growing Communities II**, 1,780 parents and 963 children were trained on child labor prevention. Twelve governing bodies called Community Development Committees (CDCOMs) were created so that community members could come together to develop solutions to common problems within their communities, including child labor.
- In Ghana’s **PROCOCO** project, access to financial services increased five-fold, from 14% to 79% by the end of the project. Eight times more families are saving for their businesses, and twice as many are saving for emergencies. Improved financial access and literacy, better agricultural practices, and broader access to extension services led to cocoa farmers tripling their income, from \$72 to \$239 by the end of the project.
- In Côte d’Ivoire’s **PROCOCO**, the project reached more 6,317 people (4,619 women, 1,698 men) with comprehensive nutrition interventions. By the end of the project, those beneficiaries translated that knowledge into actions that benefitted their household nutrition. Households in the project area consumed 16% more vegetables and green leaves than those not supported by the project. PROCOCO households were also 33% more likely to eat fruits and vegetables three or more times per day than households outside of the intervention area. The project also had an impact on food security – the percentage of food shocks in PROCOCO intervention area were 16% lower than households in the control area, with some municipalities exhibiting decreases of up to 65% in the frequency of food shocks.
- In Ghana’s **PROSPER I**, the project established 108 women’s groups with 4,105 members. The project organized microenterprise training, cooking demonstrations, nutrition discussions, and community-wide gender conversations in the communities to improve nutrition and food security, promote women’s economic empowerment and gender equality. As a result, there was a 30% increase in women reporting household financial decision-making power and an 18% increase in the women holding leadership positions.



CARE & Cargill: A Model Partnership

CARE and Cargill's sixty-year relationship has evolved from philanthropic to strategic engagement. In December 1958, Cargill sent [CARE packages](#) to more than 1,000 families, hospitals, and orphanages around the world. Cargill continued its support of CARE's work and, in 2008, announced a \$10 million, 5-year commitment called the Rural Development Initiative. Similar commitments were made in 2013, 2016, and again in 2019.

Throughout the partnership, there has been consistent and clear focus: **Cargill sought to invest in communities in proximity to its operations or sourcing, while CARE sought to leverage unique resources of the private sector** to realize its mission—ending poverty and promoting social justice. Cargill is responsible for resourcing: funding, oversight, and industry, market, and agricultural expertise. CARE designs program interventions, implements programs, and oversees monitoring and evaluation. Jointly the partners liaise with government partners and media to leverage additional support and raise awareness of the initiative. Overlapping global presence, shared commitment to socially responsible business, common core values and culture have led to what CARE and Cargill now consider a model partnership.

The CARE-Cargill partnership works because we are aligned in our desired impact. Together as partners, we set objectives, identify places to work in, monitor the progress of our interventions, and determine when change is needed. Transparency and collaboration enable us to design and manage programs that meet the needs of vulnerable people in communities close to Cargill and CARE. Each partner brings dedicated champions who guide and tend to hundreds of global intersections, and both CARE and Cargill hold conversations with transparency and a commitment to productive, efficient programming, even when unexpected challenges arise. Lastly, both partners are results-driven and committed to measurement. Because of this shared commitment, we have been able to use learning from the programs to improve the way we engage with communities and to tell our story to the broader nonprofit and corporate community.

Since 2008, CARE and Cargill have implemented four phases of programming to improve food security, nutrition, livelihoods, and governance for communities around the world, with a total investment of more than **\$35 million** in development. This includes the more than **\$9.2 million** Cargill and its customers have invested with CARE in West Africa to support these programs.



Background to the Engagement in the Cocoa Sector

From 1961 to 2013, cocoa production increased nearly four-fold, from 1.2 to 4.6 million tons worldwide – a result of rising demand by importing countries as well as exporting countries.^{2,3} West Africa is the largest producer of cocoa; Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana provide nearly 60% of the world's cocoa. However, unlike other industrialized agri-businesses, growth in demand has not resulted in large scale farm production. Instead, cocoa production is still primarily comprised of smallholder farmers who have grown their businesses using traditional farming methods.

While cocoa smallholder farmers make up the backbone of both the Ivorian and Ghanaian economies and contribute significantly to the global cocoa supply, many still live in poverty. Farmers face critical challenges such as limited economic opportunity, sub-optimal agricultural production, lack of access to inputs, finances, and services, persistent inequality, malnutrition, climate change, lack of access to education, child labor, insufficient water, and sanitation practices. These challenges disproportionately affect women and children. For instance, in Ghanaian and Ivorian cocoa-growing communities:

- Half of adult women are anemic⁴
- Between 20-30% of children are developmentally impaired due to malnutrition⁵ and
- The average cocoa farmer lives on \$1.50 or less each day⁶

To combat these challenges, CARE and Cargill collaborated over the last decade to improve agricultural production capacities, increase incomes for primary producers in the supply chains, empower women, connect farmers to markets, improve knowledge, skills, and practices regarding nutrition, and foster well-governed communities.

CARE and Cargill believe just and sustainable food and agricultural systems are possible, but only if we actively address injustice, improve rural livelihoods, and build more inclusive systems can we achieve sustainable, long-lasting impact.

This report examines factors of success over a decade of partnership between CARE and Cargill in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. It includes program examples that demonstrate positive impact and sustainability, lessons learned on how to best support communities to maintain gains and serves as a resource for others to use in establishing responsible, impact-driven, public-private partnerships.

² <http://www.fao.org/assets/infographics/FA0-Infographic-chocolate-en.pdf>

³ <https://www.oecd.org/swac/publications/39596493.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/initiative/cocoa-and-nutrition-initiative/>

⁵ <https://www.idhsustainabletrade.com/initiative/cocoa-and-nutrition-initiative/>

⁶ <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Cocoa-Sustainable-Livelihoods-Landscape-Study-summary.pdf>

Cocoa Programming: Evolution Based on Evidence & Learning

GHANA

Cocoa Program Reach in Ghana:							Cocoa Program Reach in Côte d'Ivoire:						
12	4	161,007	45,613	115,394	74,199	266	10	5	75,582	16,846	58,736	36,968	57
YEARS (2008-2020)	PROGRAMS	REACHED	REACHED DIRECTLY	REACHED INDIRECTLY	WOMEN REACHED	COMMUNITIES REACHED	YEARS (2010-2020)	PROGRAMS	REACHED	REACHED DIRECTLY	REACHED INDIRECTLY	WOMEN REACHED	COMMUNITIES REACHED

RURAL EDUCATION PROJECT IN GHANA (2008-2013)

Cargill's collaboration with CARE in the region started in Ghana, with a first phase of programming called the Rural Education Project (REP) (2008-2013), which promoted more prosperous, sustainable cocoa communities through a community development approach that set out to improve conditions in cocoa communities, reduce child labor, and increase cocoa production. This approach engages communities to lead their own development, through participatory needs assessment, action planning, and holistic interventions around capacity building for farmers and their families, education, and child labor prevention.

The community's adoption of CARE's comprehensive strategy has increased the income of cocoa farmers, improved educational opportunities for children, raised the level of community collaboration around critical challenges they faced, and reduced child labor in target areas. CARE implemented the project in 110 communities across four districts: two in the Ashanti region (Ahafo Ano North and South), one in the Brong Ahafo region (Tano North), and one in the Central region (Asikuma Odoben Brakwa). The first phase of our work in Ghana reached 60,500 people, 27,500 directly, and 33,000 indirectly. Of those reached, 21,230 were women.



CÔTE D'IVOIRE

SUPPORT TO COCOA GROWING COMMUNITIES I (2010-2012) & II IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE (2013-2015)

The initial pilot phase of the CARE-Cargill Support to Cocoa Producing Communities project in Côte d'Ivoire (2010-2012) worked to improve living conditions of ten communities in the departments of Daloa and San Pedro, focusing on interventions to combat child labor, promote education, community health and hygiene, safe water, access to financial services, and economically empower women. CARE and Cargill also constructed and rehabilitated schools and water wells. The initiative established new community structures like Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). The project reached 10,343 people, 2,100 directly and 8,243 indirectly. Of those reached, 4,716 were women.

Following the success of the pilot, CARE and Cargill continued this work through a two-year extension, supporting capacity-building and local development in 14 different cocoa farming communities. CARE continued supporting child labor remediation activities, such as obtaining birth certificates for children, and community structures like VSLAs. Other activities in this phase included ensuring access to farmer inputs as well as providing training on income diversification. The project reached 6,392 people, 3,196 directly and 3,196 indirectly. Of those reached, 3,114 were women.



PROCOCO GHANA (2013-2016)

After the success of the REP, Cargill and CARE expanded this work with a new three-year program: Prosperous Cocoa-Farming Communities (PROCOCO) in Ghana which ran from 2013 until 2016. PROCOCO sought to promote more prosperous, sustainable, and resilient cocoa farming communities building on the community development approach already established. This enables communities to both identify the key issues in their communities and engage in plans to address them. Implemented in the same 110 communities, PROCOCO employed strategies to improve the lives of farmers and their families, including improving cocoa production capacities, increasing access to savings, loans, and other sources of credit, improving nutrition knowledge, skills, and practices, and building awareness and preventing child labor.

PROCOCO Ghana built on learning from the previous phase, engaging local Cargill business representatives who provided valuable time and technical expertise across CARE's program interventions. There was also a greater focus on facilitating access to extension services, ensuring participatory and locally-led development through Community Action Plans, improving access to credit, and strengthening food security and nutrition – key challenges farmers identified following the REP.

PROCOCO in Ghana reached 58,829 people, 10,143 directly, and 48,686 indirectly. Of those reached, 29,654 were women.

PROSPER I (2016-2019) & II GHANA (2019-2022)

In 2016, CARE and Cargill expanded our reach in Ghana, through a new three-year program: Promoting a Sustainable and Food Secure World (PROSPER). PROSPER I Ghana was implemented in 108 communities, expanding into the Western Region. CARE implemented a community-driven approach to strengthen inclusive governance, enhance women's participation in decision-making processes, improve food and nutrition security, and increase access to education and child protection. It built on learning from previous phases, increasing access to services and training for women, improving nutrition, enhancing school infrastructure, and addressing climate change adaptation. PROSPER developed stronger institutional linkages and facilitated greater sustainability and scalability of project interventions – a recommendation from the previous phase. PROSPER I Ghana reached 30,710 people, 6,142 directly, and 24,568 indirectly. Of those reached, 18,299 were women.

PROSPER II, the current three-year program, was launched in 156 cocoa-growing communities in 2019. Ninety-six (96) of the communities are continuing from PROSPER I, and 60 communities are new to the project. In these communities, CARE is laying the foundation for creating 156 community development committees, developing community action plans in the new communities, and driving women's economic empowerment through agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods. Other plans include developed 156 new VSLAs, one in each community. This work takes forward the recommendations of three previous phases of programming by incorporating proven strategies in CARE's She Feeds the World program framework, which aims to lift women out of poverty by supporting them to reach their full potential. PROSPER II seeks to improve the food and nutrition security of 11,700 people directly (7,020 women) and 46,800 people indirectly (32,760 women).

PROCOCO CÔTE D'IVOIRE (2015-2018)

Prosperous Cocoa-Farming Communities (PROCOCO) in Côte d'Ivoire sought to expand the same approach as established in Ghana and bring the programs to greater alignment. PROCOCO in Côte d'Ivoire, implemented between 2015-2018, sought to promote more prosperous, sustainable and resilient cocoa-farming communities through a community development approach that engages civil society to improve their livelihoods, reduce child labor, ensure food and nutrition security, and promote education.

This phase of programming in Côte d'Ivoire was active in 10 communities and invested more resources in monitoring and evaluation to capture the true impact of our work – a key area of improvement identified in Support to Cocoa Growing Communities. The initiative also strengthened its efforts building cooperative capacity for internal management, fund mobilization, and coordination with Community Development Committees. Lastly, PROCOCO enhanced its efforts to increase access to inputs and improve nutrition for Ivorian farmers based on other learnings from the previous phase.

The project reached 20,800 people, 6,240 directly and 14,560 indirectly. Of those reached, 9,984 were women.

PROSPER I (2017-2019) & II CÔTE D'IVOIRE (2019-2022)

PROSPER I in Côte d'Ivoire, a two-year initiative between 2017-2019, worked across ten communities to support communities in their sustainable development. Key focus areas of this new initiative were informed by learning from Support to Cocoa Growing Communities and PROCOCO. PROSPER I continued to enhance the capacity of local structures, improve nutrition, increase access to financial services, establish strong WASH infrastructure, and help farmers diversify income. There was also greater emphasis on income diversification and food crop promotion, a recommendation from PROCOCO. The project reached 7,110 people, 1,185 directly and 5,925 indirectly. Of those reached, 3,480 were women.

PROSPER II, the current three-year program, was launched in September 2019 in 23 cocoa-growing communities, 10 from PROSPER I and 13 new communities where we are laying the foundation for establishing community development committees, developing community action plans in every community, forming at least 100 new VSLAs, and moving the needle on women's economic empowerment through the development of income generating activities and microenterprises. Our goal is to strengthen community governance to bolster cocoa farmers' collective action, improve financial inclusion and entrepreneurship skills of women in cocoa farming households to sustain their engagement in profitable incomes generating activities, increase the diversification of livelihood sources for cocoa farming households. PROSPER II in Côte d'Ivoire, like Ghana, is informed by previous learning; its interventions were designed based on CARE's She Feeds the World program framework and focus primarily on the empowerment of women cocoa farmers. The project aims to reach 7,700 beneficiaries directly (6,200 women) and 46,500 indirectly (32,550 men).

KEY MOMENT

PROCOCO in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire also reflected the Cargill Cocoa Promise strategy launched in 2012, which set out to achieve a sustainable cocoa supply chain. The Cargill Cocoa Promise was established as a formal, future-looking and action-oriented framework for global

sustainability activities, building on 10 years of experience in the field with farmers and farmer organizations. This has further strengthened our engagement and became a cornerstone program with the Cargill Cocoa & Chocolate Community Wellbeing strategic action plan.

KEY CHANGES TO THE FOUR PHASES OF COCOA PROGRAMMING



PHASE 1

RURAL EDUCATION PROJECT (GHANA) & SUPPORT TO COCOA GROWING COMMUNITIES (CIV)

The first phase involved communities to launch new programs to combat child labor, improve access to education, and economically empower women.



PHASE 2

PROCOCO

The second phase aligned program strategies in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire under the Cargill Cocoa Promise strategy. It built on program learning from the first phase to improve access to agricultural inputs, access to financial services (like VSLAs), and monitoring and evaluation systems.



PHASE 3

PROSPER I

This phase, in addition to the priority interventions taken forward from previous phases, also emphasized income diversification, improved nutrition, climate resilience, and greater sustainability and scalability of interventions.



PHASE 4

PROSPER II

The current phase aligned program strategies in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire under the CARE She Feeds the World Framework. The current phase drives women's economic empowerment, strengthens community governance, and continues to build on previous nutrition, income diversification, and infrastructure investments.



Core Components of Our Work

The benefit of working together for such a significant period has enabled the partnership to build on each phase, incorporating the learning and best practices from each previous set of programs. Overall, our core areas of focus where we believe we have seen the greatest impact are outlined below.



Those needs and actions are outlined in a Community Action Plan (CAP), a public document developed and owned by a community to shape a community's progress and to feed into local government development planning. CAPs address issues surrounding critical issues like access to essential services, child labor, education, water, sanitation, and hygiene. To date, CARE and Cargill have supported the establishment of 275 CDCOMs comprising 3,535 members (968 women). Those CDCOMs have led the development of 275 CAPs, resulting in more than 160 community infrastructure improvements in both Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, including the establishment of hydraulic pumps, construction of school facilities, and latrines.

THE PROOF

PROSPER I in Ghana (2016-2019) sought to improve livelihoods and enhance the capacity of local organized structures to own and lead development processes. Before the start of PROSPER Ghana, partner communities lacked capacity to develop CAPs and mobilize funds to address pressing needs. Training in community organizational management and frequent sensitization on a community's role in development raised awareness of participants to initiate community-level funding schemes to fund their own development projects. Participants also developed skills to lobby support from state and non-state actors in order to execute capital-intensive projects.

From 2016 to 2019, 108 CDCOMs were established with 1,172 members (374 women), all of which continue to function and lead change in their communities. These CDCOMs developed 108 CAPs, one in each community, that encompassed 366 individual projects. CAPs included the construction of bridges, rehabilitation of schools, installation of water points, and construction of latrines; 37 of these projects were ultimately integrated into local government development plans, a demonstration of the project's success in driving collective action across NGO and governmental stakeholders, while ensuring sustainability of these initiatives beyond the support of the project. This community-driven approach, and coordination with local government and other bodies, also enhanced communities' capacities to improve access to education and child protection.⁷

Moving forward, CARE and Cargill aim to take this approach to the next level by improving coordination with other stakeholders and formalizing partnerships with other sector actors to drive enhanced community infrastructure and better support the CDCOMs to address community needs. Our current PROSPER programming in both Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire are prioritizing these actions to meet community infrastructure needs more broadly while also contributing to improved sustainability of the CDCOMs.



⁷ PROSPER I 36 Month Report – Page 26, PROSPER Ghana, Inclusive Development in Ghana, 2019

Ensuring Community Wellbeing

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

CARE's Participatory, Learning, and Action (PLA) approach, based on its long experience in community development, ensures that communities are a part of the development process by carrying out participatory needs assessments with the active involvement of community members and key stakeholders. Community representatives, key opinion leaders, and leaders of identifiable groups and institutions are engaged through focus group discussions and interviews to define the extent of the needs that exist in communities in which we work and the depth of resources available within the community to address those needs. These representatives then sit on Community Development Committees (CDCOMs) that lead the identification of needs, mobilize resources to address identified needs, and spearhead local development initiatives.



Women's Leadership Grows in Cocoa Communities

Mavis, a mother of three, is among the women who participated in PROSPER I capacity building trainings for community development committees. She acquired a set of skills in leadership, governance and decision-making processes as well as food security and household nutrition, community mobilization and advocacy. Mavis was elected by her peers to represent women at the community development committee. She is inspiring and encouraging women and girls to take part in community development and decision-making processes and avail themselves for leadership positions. In addition to representing women on the community development committee, Mavis was elected president of the community women's group. "These two positions have shaped me, increased my confidence level and improved my leadership and advocacy skills," Mavis says. As a result, Mavis was able to mobilize more women and youth in her community to support (through their labor) the construction of the nurses' quarters.



The village chief and elders of Kojokrom began to recognize Mavis' leadership potential and subsequently named her as the Nketasia Hema (Queen of women and youth) in the community of 1,072 adult men and women. Mavis now sits not only on the community development committee but among 14 traditional male leaders and on behalf of 527 women where community decisions are taken with confidence.

"The project's interventions are helping women and the community at large to appreciate the significance of women's voice in decision-making," Mavis says. "My next dream is to mobilize single mothers and parents to take up initiatives to improve their livelihoods and self-esteem to enable them cope with social changes and rise out of poverty." She thanked CARE and Cargill for investing in women cocoa farmers, noting that the investment is contributing immensely to social, cultural and economic changes and the empowerment of women.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Women's voice, equity and empowerment are woven throughout CARE's and Cargill's cocoa programming to address the limitations faced by women, as well as the local gender biases, patriarchal social norms, and unequal structures that prevent women from reaching their full potential as farmers and business owners. For example, it is estimated that women in Côte d'Ivoire own 25% of the cocoa farms and are 68% of the cocoa labor force, but only earn 21% of the profits from cocoa production.⁸ Cargill is working with more than 16,000 women cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. Yet, gender inequality in the cocoa production and supply chain prevent an institutional recognition of the critical role women play in the cocoa sector. This diminishes the space and opportunities offered to women to become vital and influential stakeholders in the cocoa supply chain.

Simultaneously, women lack access to credit and savings, land, information, education, and the ability to participate in household and community decision-making. Women farmers, who have historically been unpaid and unrecognized for their roles in cocoa production, continue to be deprived of the benefits that should have accrued to them from the exploding demand and resultant increase in cocoa production in West Africa. With this in mind, CARE addresses longstanding and

deeply rooted gender inequities by bringing women into community action planning, empowering women as leaders, engaging communities in gender dialogues, and joining women together in farmers' cooperatives and VSLAs to build social solidarity, and provide access to financial institutions as well as quality agricultural and business training.

THE PROOF

Through PROSPER I in Ghana (2016-2019), CARE mobilized 108 women's groups with 4,105 members and trained 304 leaders of those women's groups on effective management in support of community development. The project organized microenterprise training and community-wide gender conversations to improve women's economic empowerment and gender equality. Thirty women's groups were fully engaged in community development activities to address topics such as sanitation, nutrition, health, education, and monitoring for malnutrition in primary schools. The women's groups also opened bank accounts and raised capital through weekly contributions for various economic activities.

Women's Empowerment in PROSPER I Ghana:

108 WOMEN'S GROUPS MOBILIZED

4,105 MEMBERS

1,651 PEOPLE ENGAGED IN GENDER DIALOGUES

74% OF WOMEN NOW PARTICIPATE IN HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL DECISION-MAKING

34% OF WOMEN NOW HOLD LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

In partnership with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the National Board for Small-scale Industries, microenterprise trainings were provided for 163 women from 11 women's groups, with training on specific income-generating activities such as making and selling products for hair and skin, detergents, and pastries.

CARE also continued facilitating discussions around women's participation in community development and organized gender dialogues for 1,651 people (62% women) in 57 communities. These discussions helped communities identify gender issues and create gender action plans, from which emerged positive outcomes. As a result, 74% of the 507 women surveyed said they participated in household financial decision-making (a 30% increase from baseline). Sixty-four percent (64%) reported that they were active participants in community meetings and contributed to community development decisions (a 19% increase from baseline), and 34% indicated that they held leadership positions (political, social, and religious) – an 18.4% increase from the baseline.⁹ This evidence demonstrates how CARE and Cargill's programmatic support in these communities has created profound change for women. Not only can women supported by the program participate in household decision-making more, they have greater opportunity to engage in formal decision-making spaces and to serve as leaders within the community.

▶ *"When you invest in a woman, you're investing in her whole family. We find that when you invest in a woman, particularly in a low-income country, overall yields and incomes in the community increase."*

MICHELLE GROGG, Vice President, Corporate Responsibility at Cargill

⁸ African Development Bank. 2015. Economic Empowerment of African Women through Equitable Participation in Agricultural Value Chains.

⁹ PROSPER I 36 Month Report – Pages 27-28

ENSURING FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION FOR FAMILIES

Poor nutrition practices can cause chronic malnutrition and contribute to low productivity, which affects economic growth, negatively impacts food and health systems, and limits effective education in farming communities. Improved nutrition knowledge also empowers households to address harmful social and gender norms and practices related to food choices, intra-household food distribution, and consumption patterns. Beliefs and perceptions that shape practices range from those that prevent pregnant women from eating eggs and the fleshier parts of meat, to placing the entire pot of cooked food before the husband to distribute, which often results in him getting the best part of the food. Consuming a diverse, nutritionally adequate diet throughout the year is essential for good health for all family members.

Over the last decade, CARE and Cargill have worked with communities to promote healthy nutrition practices through training, participatory activities, and school partnerships. Emphasizing the importance of a nutritionally diverse diet, CARE leads discussions on healthy eating habits, food hygiene, clean water, and malnutrition. To support healthy nutrition behaviors, our programs promote consumption of diverse foods using food demonstrations, nutrition games, community theater events, and the establishment of school and community gardens.

These school and community gardens encourage participants to practice healthy eating habits and food hygiene. By working with communities and schools to ensure they have resources, skills, and knowledge to make healthy food choices when preparing and consuming meals, we have increased healthy nutrition behaviors by promoting the production of diverse foods, reiterating that this diversification of diet is an integral component to improving nutrition.



THE PROOF

PROCOCO Ghana (2013-2016) provided nutrition and food security education to 5,653 community members (3,675 women, 1,978 men) via VSLA meetings, community meetings, home visits, child growth monitoring and promotion, and meetings of faith-based organizations. Training included what constitutes a nutritious diet and how people can best meet their nutritional needs from available resources. This minimized the taboos and inadequate understanding of the relationship between diet and health.

Community-level nutrition education was designed to help families with limited resources make food choices to improve their diets and health. Activities included hands-on learning, demonstrations, and discussions. Participatory cooking demonstrations helped families plan and prepare nutritious meals, manage their food and cash resources wisely, select seasonal vegetables and fruits, process available surpluses, and handle food safely.

Nutrition, food security, agricultural productivity, income, education and women's empowerment are interconnected, and so PROCOCO and CARE work across communities using multiple interventions to achieve interconnected outcomes. Focusing on multiple avenues of change is imperative to stimulate conditions for the long-term defeat of poverty. Cooking demonstrations, of which CARE conducted 37 demonstrations for 2,417 people, to promote improved child and family feeding recipes using locally available foods that most families can afford to buy or produce on their farms or in their gardens, is an example of this integrated approach. PROCOCO Ghana ultimately contributed to reductions in household food insecurity, with the average number of months of household food insecurity per year decreasing by 12.5%, from 4 months at the baseline to 3.5 months at the endline. More than a third of farmers attributed changes in access to food to increased variety of local food (33.1%). Other farmers attributed the improved food security to good farm health (18.1%), increased revenue (14.5%), training and education from CARE and Cargill (12%), and increased access to food on their own farms (12%).¹⁰ Future phases of nutrition programming have expanded on the success of PROCOCO, employing this nutrition approach with certain enhancements, including a greater focus on women's and children's nutrition.

Strengthening Nutrition and Food Security in PROCOCO Côte d'Ivoire:

6,317 PARTICIPANTS REACHED

4,619 WOMEN PARTICIPANTS

16% CONSUMED MORE VEGETABLES AND GREEN LEAVES

33% OF HOUSEHOLDS ARE MORE LIKELY TO EAT FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

65% DECREASE IN FREQUENCY OF FOOD SHOCKS IN SOME MUNICIPALITIES

The partnership's approach to nutrition proved successful in PROCOCO Côte d'Ivoire (2015-2018) as well. CARE's comprehensive nutrition interventions reached more 6,317 people (4,619 women, 1,698 men) and contributed to households consuming more nutritious foods.¹¹ By the end of the project, those beneficiaries translated that knowledge into actions that benefitted their household nutrition. Households in the project area consumed 16% more vegetables

¹⁰ PROCOCO Final Evaluation Report – Page 20

¹¹ PROSPER I 12 Month Report – Page 9

and green leaves than those not supported by the project. PROCOCO households were also 33% more likely to eat fruits and vegetables three or more times per day than households outside of the intervention area. The project also had an impact on food security – the percentage of food shocks in PROCOCO intervention area was 16% lower than households in the control area, with some municipalities exhibiting decreases of up to 65% in the frequency of food shocks. Improved food security and lower food shocks are key indicators of consistent household food supply.¹²

Learnings from PROCOCO Côte d'Ivoire were taken forward and enhanced in an ongoing nutrition initiative in five PROSPER communities, in partnership with CARE, Cargill, and The Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH). This targeted initiative focuses on improving nutrition and water, sanitation, and hygiene outcomes through women's economic empowerment and specifically targets pregnant and lactating women, as well as children. PROSPER Côte d'Ivoire include interventions specific to increasing knowledge of essential nutrition actions (ENA), educating women on the importance of pre- and post-natal visits during pregnancy, sensitizing pregnant and lactating women on recommended child feeding practices, and promoting the purchase and production of nutritious food. The new initiative is set to end in December 2020, during which CARE will assess the broader impact of these interventions on household nutrition.

Improved Nutritional Practices for Infants in Côte d'Ivoire

Kobenan Abenan Madoussou, like the majority of rural women in Côte d'Ivoire, was very attached to the traditional nutritional practices she inherited from her mother – practices that can be very harmful to the health of both mother and child. For instance, Kobenan had been taught from an early age that yellow milk (colostrum) is “dirty milk,” containing impurities that cause disease in newborns. Instead of colostrum, Kobenan says, the tradition was to give sweetened water to newborns until breast milk was available. They believed that water would make the child grow. Also, from the age of 3 months, babies were given solid food, such as corn porridge, millet and rice.

Now, Kobenan is president of Bissata, a VSLA in her community that has facilitated critical training and awareness-raising on health and nutrition. “Today, thanks to the VSLA and to the sensitization on early nutrition assessment provided by the PROSPER project, I know that colostrum is good for children because it protects them against diseases. It must be given to the child. Moreover, only breast milk should be given to the child until the age of 6 months. Breast milk already contains water, and it also contains all the necessary elements for the good growth of the child. Thanks to these practices, my baby is doing wonderfully.”



CHILD LABOR PREVENTION

There are 168 million child laborers between 5 and 17 around the world,¹³ and an estimated 108 million work in the agriculture sector.¹⁴ In Sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 29% of children between 5 and 17 are child laborers, and one

in four children are engaged in work that is harmful to their health.¹⁵ Only in cocoa, an estimated 1.56 million children work on family cocoa farms in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.¹⁶ Child labor is a result of many factors, including lack of economic opportunity, low wages, and barriers to education. In some cases, children stop attending school and begin working to provide additional income for their families.

In cocoa-producing communities, children are vulnerable to becoming child laborers in order to help with household expenses. While engaged in cocoa production activities, children risk harm to themselves by using machetes and other hazardous tools to harvest cocoa pods, and through exposure to agricultural chemicals without protective clothing. With education as the focus of interventions seeking to reduce child labor, CARE and Cargill employ a multi-sectoral community development approach to promote education, increase awareness of child labor, and support the growth of household incomes across cocoa growing communities in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, aiming to tackle many of the root causes of this issue.

Our collaboration also builds on Cargill's commitment to addressing the root causes of child labor within the Cargill Cocoa Promise. Cargill is working with partners to implement targeted community-driven initiatives aimed at identifying and preventing child labor across the cocoa supply chain. In partnership with the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI), Cargill is implementing an innovative model for child labor prevention and response, called Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation System (CLMRS). This system allows Cargill to go a step further in its efforts to eradicate child labor and is based on best practices developed by ICI and is embedded in the monitoring and evaluation program for the Cargill Cocoa Promise. CLMRS works to raise awareness about the impact of child labor, identify incidents within the supply chain, and implement remediation activities such as providing access to birth certificates, school kits and community schools, as well as strengthening school management and establishing child protection committees.



¹² PROCOCO Cote d'Ivoire Final Evaluation Brief – Page 1

¹³ UNICEF: [Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse](#)

¹⁴ Food and Ag. Organization of the UN: [Child Labor in Agriculture](#)

¹⁵ UNICEF: [Child Labor](#)

¹⁶ <https://cocoainitiative.org/our-work/child-labour-in-cocoa/>

THE PROOF

Support to Cocoa Growing Communities II (2013-2015) (SCGC II) in Côte d'Ivoire sought to improve the living conditions of smallholder farmers and their families by using holistic approaches to promote economic and social development in cocoa producing communities. Between 2013 and 2015, SCGC II trained 1,780 parents and 963 children to recognize and understand various forms of child labor and laws concerning the worst forms of child labor. In addition, 12 governing bodies – Community Development Committees (CDCOMs) – were created so that community members could come together to develop solutions to common problems within their communities, including child labor.

At the end of SCGC II, on average, the cooperatives estimated an 82% reduction in the risk of child labor among families in 15 communities. The combination of child labor education, community action planning via CDCOMs, and stakeholder engagement contributed to this observed decrease in the risk of child labor in Côte d'Ivoire.¹⁷ Child labor prevention and mitigation is sustained in these communities through the structures and processes established by the project that continue to be led by communities. The CDCOMs, for instance, include child protection focal points that comprise child protection committees dedicated to sensitizing the communities on child labor and to how identify and prevent it. They also support communities in the mobilization of resources from local government and other stakeholders to continue educational infrastructure develop, rehabilitation, and improvement such that children have greater access to schools.

This approach was also successful in PROCOCO Ghana. Child protection training among beneficiaries and stakeholders, combined with school-related infrastructure development and rehabilitation, placed education at the center. With education identified as the pathway to supporting the elimination of child labor, PROCOCO was able to successfully contribute to a reduction in child labor, from 16.2% to 9.3% at the endline. Education-centric social and behavior change communication, combined with child labor reduction efforts, influenced educational outcomes as well, with primary school enrollment increasing by 4%.¹⁸



¹⁷ Support to Cocoa Growing Communities II Final Evaluation Report – Page 49

¹⁸ PROCOCO Ghana Final Evaluation Report – Page 22

Our suite of interventions addressing child labor has become a best practice. The programs that followed PROCOCO and SCGC II dedicated greater resources toward establishing child protection committees, improving education infrastructure, and enhancing capacities of CDCOMs and other groups to identify and prevent child labor. CARE is also now working alongside industry leaders like The World Cocoa Foundation and International Cocoa Initiative to better monitor and track key community development and child labor metrics across the region. These data inform our ways of working, allowing for course-corrections and reallocation of resources to priority areas in cocoa communities.

CARE and Cargill are working together with the International Cocoa Initiative to establish a community-based Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation System (CLMRS) to prevent, identify and remediate child labor in Cargill's supply chain in Ghana. 56 communities that are part of PROSPER II are participating in the CLMRS. Community facilitators selected with support from CARE and trained by ICI have monitored 8,000 cocoa households and raise awareness on hazardous child labor. CARE will continue working with ICI in the implementation of community-based interventions to prevent and remediate child labor in Ghana based on the results of the monitoring.

Improving Farmer Livelihoods and Resilience

INCREASING ACCESS TO FINANCE

Access to savings, loans, and other sources of credit is a core component to fostering prosperous and resilient communities. Farmers often face capital constraints in planting or harvesting their crops, and it is not uncommon for them to take loans between harvests. Many face high interest rates, lack collateral, or have few options other than loan sharks. In 1991, CARE launched Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) in Niger, offering people a safe way to save money and gain access to loans. This model harnesses the ancient practices of group savings in a way that requires no outside capital, only a lockbox, three keys, and basic financial training. Within these groups, members save regularly which allows for income smoothing for the rural poor. These groups are established to create and support a strong savings culture in the community and to allow for a safe space for the rural poor to save for and access small loans. Members are also able to take out small loans to build income-generating activities. These groups base their activities on trust, accountability, and transparency in all transactions. Savings and loan activities bring together neighbors who trust each other, and often these groups meet for many years. CARE and Cargill understand the value these groups bring to communities and have focused on bringing credit closer to farmers over the last decade. To date, CARE and Cargill have established 376 VSLAs comprising 9,034 members (6,853 women) in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. Those VSLA members have saved \$301,186 while distributing \$189,014 in loans.

THE PROOF

The aim of VSLA integration into PROCOCO Ghana (2013-2016) was to establish a savings culture and enhance the financial literacy of rural cocoa communities to reduce their vulnerabilities and expand economic opportunities. During PROCOCO, 2,180 farmers (1,271 women, 909 men) in 89 VSLAs saved more than \$112,000 combined. A total of \$73,526.15 was disbursed as loans was mainly used to support agricultural activities and other businesses.

Access to Finance in Ghana & Côte d'Ivoire:

376

VSLAs CREATED

9,034

MEMBERS

6,853

WOMEN MEMBERS

\$301,186

SAVED

\$189,014

IN LOANS DISTRIBUTED

By the end of the project, the proportion of farmers who reported accessing at least one form of financial service increased five-fold, from a baseline figure of 14% to 79% at the endline, with nearly three-quarters of farmers holding cash savings by the end of the project. VSLA members were more than twice as likely to report holding cash savings and more than 3.5 times as likely to have accessed a loan in the last 12 months, compared to non-VSLA members of the project. Moreover, saving has dramatically shifted. Eight times more families are saving for their businesses, and twice as many are saving for emergencies. Increased household saving for business and emergencies, coupled with greater access to credit, provided historically marginalized smallholder farming families with a cushion in the case of unexpected emergencies on their farms or within their homes.¹⁹

Improved financial access and literacy, better agricultural practices, and broader access to extension services led to cocoa farmers tripling their income, from \$72 to \$239 by the end of the project.²⁰

Increasing Access to Financial Services in PROCOCO Ghana

- 65%** INCREASE IN FARMERS ACCESSING FINANCIAL SERVICES
- 3.5X** AS LIKELY TO HAVE ACCESSED A LOAN IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS
- 8X** MORE FAMILIES SAVING FOR THEIR BUSINESSES
- 2X** AS MANY ARE SAVING FOR EMERGENCIES

INCOME DIVERSIFICATION & CONNECTING FARMERS TO INCLUSIVE MARKETS

Market systems development is a proven approach to achieve sustainable impact at scale. Through market systems development, organizations seek to ensure that their work builds markets that are competitive, inclusive, and resilient. Throughout the last decade, CARE and Cargill have explicitly focused on making markets work for the poor, especially in West Africa where cocoa farmers live on an average of \$1.50 or less each day, and creating market linkages. To strengthen farmer livelihoods, we look beyond cocoa and also support on- and off-farm diversification for financial, social and environmental benefits. We do this through a holistic approach that goes beyond productivity to diversify their incomes and strengthen their resilience. CARE also uses market literacy approaches that increase farmers' understanding of how markets function and increase their abilities to identify and take advantage of opportunities in the marketplace.

CARE pioneered the **Push-Pull model**, which looks at interventions that build farmers' ability to participate in markets (push factors) and changes to the market that make it more possible for small-scale farmers to participate in markets (pull factors). CARE and Cargill have integrated several push factors within the partner's program interventions, including building agricultural skills, helping farmers organize collectives for group action, connecting small-scale food producers to market actors and information, and assisting farmers in getting access to credit. The partnership also addressed key pull factors, including strengthening input supply systems and getting services available closer to farmers.

¹⁹ PROCOCO Ghana Final Evaluation Report – Page 17
²⁰ PROCOCO Ghana Final Evaluation Report – Page 22

CARE and Cargill have employed market systems analysis as a guiding approach to program design, ensuring that interventions are addressing systemic constraints that inhibit markets. Through this approach, we have been able to transform the lives of thousands of small-scale farmers. CARE and Cargill are working with farmers to ensure that they have access to productive resources, skills, and knowledge they need to improve and shape their lives. The partnership strives to not only increase access to markets but to unlock greater production, expand profits on small-scale agriculture, and increase food security. Lastly, both partners are collaborating to ensure small-scale farmers can participate in collectives to negotiate better market outcomes and make decisions in market systems. The Cargill Cocoa Promise is working with 132,000 smallholder cocoa farmers and supporting their business development in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. Inherent in this strategy is a strong supply chain for Cargill and reliable market for these farmers. This market access approach is further strengthened by Cargill's extensive field network across both countries, where Cargill operates through 128 cooperatives in Côte d'Ivoire and 7 buying stations in Ghana.

THE PROOF

PROCOCO Ghana (2013-2016) built longstanding relationships with communities to support smallholders to develop meaningful and profitable participation in the cocoa market by enhancing their access to resources, services, and skills. PROCOCO Ghana worked with COCOBOD, a Ghanaian government-controlled institution that aims to support and protect producers, to expand extension services through increased government funding to more farmers by increasing the number of extension agents by 35%. These agents trained project farmers on good agricultural practices in cocoa production and distributed agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and improved seed varieties. Overall, the proportion of PROCOCO Ghana farmers who benefited from a quality agricultural extension increased two-fold, from 31% at baseline to 75% at the endline study.²¹ Access to inputs also improved two-fold, from 32.87% at baseline to 65.3% by the end of the project.²²

Improving Access to Extension Services and Agricultural Inputs in PROCOCO Ghana

- 31% to 75%** INCREASE IN FARMERS BENEFITTING FROM QUALITY AGRICULTURAL EXPERTISE
- 33% to 65%** INCREASE IN FARMERS BENEFITTING FROM ACCESS TO QUALITY INPUTS

PROCOCO in Côte d'Ivoire (2015-2018) employed an integrated market-based approach. The project supported farmers with farm diversification, ensuring that cocoa farmers had alternative sources of on-farm income. Crop diversity and multiple income streams are proven ways to spread risk and improve farmer resilience to environmental and economic shocks. PROCOCO worked alongside cocoa farmers to improve their capacities in other income-generating activities, including plantain and cassava production. The project facilitated the establishment of 34 plantain plots and 37 cassava plots, all spanning over 21,000 hectares, and linked farmers with markets respectively to sell their new production. By the end of the project, the plots generated over \$2,016 and \$1,544 at the market, respectively.²³ The amount generated at the market by these farmers is greater than the total income an average cocoa farming household makes in one year,²⁴ providing additional income that could serve as a safety net during economic shocks and hardships.

²¹ PROCOCO Final Evaluation – Page 15
²² PROCOCO Final Evaluation – Page 16
²³ Care-Cargill Phase II 24 Month Report – Page 10
²⁴ https://files.fairtrade.net/publications/2018_FairtradeCocoaFarmerIncomeCDI.pdf

Giving Women the Opportunity to be Breadwinners

Elizabeth Ahou Yao, 38, is married with four children and lives in Aki Kouamekro community. Her husband is a cocoa farmer. Most women like Elizabeth will help with planting, pruning and carrying pods for the cocoa harvest, in addition to their other daily activities. Until recently, Elizabeth did not know how to read or write. This is not uncommon in Côte d'Ivoire, where only about 30 percent of women are literate. For her it meant that she couldn't write her own name. She couldn't help her kids with their homework. Being illiterate held her back from breaking out of the cycle of poverty.

But with help from PROCOCO, Elizabeth joined a VSLA. She learned how to read and write a little, and she also discovered how to save money, a small amount at a time, that she can use when she wants to invest in the farm or in her children's education. She says that now, for the first time, she feels proud of herself and what she is accomplishing. Thanks to the savings from her VSLA, Elizabeth started her own cassava farm and she makes and sells attieke, a local delicacy made from ground and fermented root. The small business she started with the support of few family members is now a source of livelihood for many other women in the community. In fact, her business has grown so much that she has hired and is training other members of her VSLA.

The changes in Elizabeth's life don't stop there. In Côte d'Ivoire, men are usually expected to be the breadwinners of the family. But this year, the El Niño weather effect has created a drought, and Elizabeth's husband, Kouadio, had no income from the mid-year cocoa harvest. "I have used up all my savings," he says. "But Elizabeth has been the breadwinner throughout this season of drought." Men like Kouadio, who value and support their wives, are great examples of how empowering women and engaging men can change communities. CARE and Cargill support a lot more women like Elizabeth –and men like Kouadio –who are empowered to support their families, learn to read and write, and pass on to their children a legacy of education and new opportunities.



To improve the adaptive capacity, yield, and income of farmers through the adoption of more sustainable agriculture, value addition, and market engagement practices, CARE and Cargill use the **Farmer's Field and Business School** (FFBS). FFBS is a participatory platform for farmers to experiment with and learn about approaches to resilient agricultural production techniques, risk analysis, business management, market literacy, and gender equity. VSLAs, farmer groups, and other community collectives are entry points for CARE's FFBS approach. FFBS allows farmers to observe varying practices and corresponding harvest yields so that they make informed decisions about farming techniques. Farmers learn about cocoa production but also how to grow multiple kinds of crops to feed their families nutritious foods, diversify their incomes, and build resilience and enhance nutrition. This has the collective effect of increasing farmer incomes and living standards. FFBS also provides insights into individual adoption rates of good agricultural practices – how are communities adopting, adapting, and empowering themselves to make collective decisions on how to manage their farms better?

THE PROOF

The Rural Education Project in Ghana (2008-2013) trained 9,625 cocoa farmers, 39 agricultural extension officers and 87 community animators who work within the community to deliver training sessions. CARE also established 75 demonstration farms, serving as practical training grounds for farmers to "learn by doing" and increase their cocoa production. By the end of the project, there was a 25% increase in cocoa yields among project-supported farmers. Cocoa yields increased from 3,371 tons to 4,217 tons between the baseline and endline studies. CARE's agricultural training package, combined with greater access to extension services and strong market linkage, led to a 29% increase in average farmer income and continued in future programming.²⁵

INCREASING FARMER RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

West African cocoa-growing communities are increasingly vulnerable to climate change. CARE and Cargill's strategy for increasing farmer resilience to climate impacts focuses on improving livelihoods for cocoa farmers and helping them adapt to the increasing effects of climate change. We work with communities, empowering them in their role in developing sustainable agriculture and agroforestry. Increasingly, CARE focuses its efforts on training agricultural extension advisers and crop promoters in how to assist cocoa farmers in adapting to climate change.

CARE's resilience approach seeks to enhance people's ability to accommodate the immediate effects of shocks and stresses, and improve adaptation to frequent floods, drought, and other climatic conditions. Our work at the community level is driven by a participatory Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) approach, driving community awareness-raising, training, and decision making to identify appropriate adaptation responses to community challenges. CARE's programming in Ivorian and Ghanaian cocoa communities have included several initiatives that have contributed to supporting people to build resilience to the impacts of climate change, including: diversification of crop production, increased adoption of sustainable farming practices that conserve water and soil moisture, and increased access to climate information for risk management.²⁶

THE PROOF

PROCOCO Côte d'Ivoire (2015-2018) trained 6,317 people on farm diversification while also promoting water conservation technology.²⁷ The project provided capacity building for community members regarding the use of water reservoirs. CARE trained 57 community members (41 women) on the sustainable use of two water reservoirs for crop irrigation while also installing water pumps.²⁸ The approaches from this project were then taken forward and strengthened in the following program.

²⁵ RDI Final Report – Page 11

²⁶ <https://careclimatechange.org/where-we-work/ghana/>

²⁷ PROSPER I 18 Month Report – Page 8

²⁸ PROSPER I 30 Month Report – Page 10

BUILDING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION CAPACITIES

CARE and Cargill have a strong focus on helping farmers navigate fluctuating socioeconomic and environmental conditions by building their capacity, improving their access to resources and increasing their resilience. Over the last decade, the partnership has promoted good agricultural practices to improve the production capacities of farming communities through community groups, including **Village Savings and Loans Associations** (VSLA), farmer groups, and self-help groups. CARE uses these community groups as a platform for building a diverse set of skills and capacities, including sustainable agriculture. Working with groups also has the advantage of building social solidarity and creating social capital, as well as giving people a space to experiment with peers, and develop literacy, financial literacy, functional numeracy, and other context-specific life skills. This is well aligned to Cargill's approach to engaging cocoa cooperatives in this work. Over the decade that Cargill and CARE have been working, we've enabled 128 cooperatives to be established in Côte d'Ivoire alone.

PROSPER I in Côte d'Ivoire (2017-2019) trained 20 food crop promoters on vegetable production to diversify crop production among cocoa farmers. The project worked with local organizations, including the National Agency for Rural Development, to provide capacity building on subsistence and vegetable farming techniques and conservation practices to those food crop promoters. As a result, the food crop promoters supported 743 farmers (528 women) to diversify their crop production, including okra, chili peppers, maize, eggplant, and rice. The project provided additional support by improving access to agricultural inputs for those farmers, including seeds, organic fertilizer, and handheld tools. The farmers began to generate multiple on-farm income streams, from cocoa and food crops, and used an average of one-third of their food crop production for household consumption. The adoption of crop diversification was critical to building resilience, as maintaining multiple crops can mitigate and spread climate change-related risks, such as production loss due to ecological (i.e., pests) or climatic impacts (i.e., drought, floods, etc.).²⁹

Transformation, Together

USING DATA TO DELIVER CHANGE AT SCALE

CARE is developing and testing new impact-measuring systems to provide real-time data, help inform program innovation and improve the quality and scale of our cocoa programs. We are creating a top-level dashboard that provides visibility to key program performance metrics, and we have transitioned to electronic data collection to facilitate real-time data use and adaptive management. The partnership uses a standard set of metrics (linked to the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals, CARE Global Indicators, and Cargill's Cocoa Promise Metrics) rather than reinventing metrics for each project. We also use beneficiary surveys to enable direct feedback from program participants, and we invest in data analytics to understand the long-term impact of programs and to isolate the most essential elements of sustainable change. CARE and Cargill use these data to inform program management, course correct when needed, and ensure the highest level of quality and reach of our cocoa interventions.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is at the core of CARE and Cargill's work. Together, we promote sustainable agriculture systems that address climate and environmental impacts, and which are grounded in healthy ecosystems that driven by stable, accountable, and capable institutions and policies and based on social and economic policies that promote sustainable progress. CARE and Cargill utilize approaches that enable partners, local service providers, and targeted participants to gradually adopt and maintain improved sustainable practices and tools across a global portfolio of projects.

CARE and Cargill are also committed to strengthening inclusive governance within communities. The participatory needs assessments and community action planning that are core to our programs ensure active, meaningful involvement of community members, leaders, and other key stakeholders; this ensures cocoa community engagement throughout the development process. This participatory process creates buy-in and gives a voice to cocoa communities regarding their sustainable development, resulting in broader stakeholder support of the action plans, while ensuring sustainability of projects. For example, since 2008, communities supported by CARE have developed 275 CAPs; the same number of CDCOMs, guided by CARE and 3,535 CDCOM leaders, have implemented CAP projects that addressed critical issues surrounding access to basic services, child labor, education, water, sanitation, and hygiene.

The partnership is also building institutional sustainability by working with and through government, the private sector, and local actors through policy and advocacy to ensure project models are adopted and scaled for broader impact. For instance, in 2015 the partnership in Côte d'Ivoire leveraged the success of Support to Cocoa Growing Communities I and II to engage local government, ultimately receiving additional support from the Conseil du Café Cacao (Coffee and Cocoa Council), which invested approximately \$1 million to match funding from Cargill and targeted cooperatives.³⁰ This funding supported the construction of 33 teacher's housing units and 9 nurses' housing units to complement that 11 schools and 3 health centers built by the project.

²⁹ PROSPER I 36 Month Report - Pages 16-17

³⁰ CARE-Cargill Phase II 24 Month Report - Page 25



Looking to the Future

LESSONS LEARNED

STRONGER GENDER PROGRAMMING: Most successful projects are gender-transformative and work to create change both at the household level as well as systemically. Our partnership has a gender-focus, including explicit strategies to engage men and boys in the promotion of women's empowerment to improve attitudes, behaviors, and structures that support gender equality for people and communities. Gender inequities continue to limit women, particularly women farmers. Nevertheless, CARE and Cargill seek to continually strengthen its gender programming by addressing gender inequality in cocoa farming communities, supporting women's empowerment, increasing women's access to and control of productive resources, and enabling women's access to inclusive markets.

LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO INCREASE THE PACE OF IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVER CHANGE AT SCALE: CARE's VSLA approach has created an enormous value in the communities we serve, improving access to finance for women and men who are often excluded from formal financial systems. The VSLAs provide members a platform to access informal financial services and training across various topics, including financial literacy, business management, and diversification through income-generating activities. CARE aims to take its VSLA platform to the next level within the CARE-Cargill partnership, building a new generation of VSLAs that not only improve access to finance at the community level, but also open doors to the emerging digital economy. This includes digitization of the VSLA process using a shared digital platform to promote effective cashless systems by reducing security risks and increasing productivity. It also entails transforming a paper-based record system to an electronic system to improve tracking of loans and savings across VSLAs, enhancing group efficiencies, transparency, and data sharing. The evolution of VSLAs into the digital world will accelerate and deepen financial inclusion while increasing the usage of digital financial services in rural cocoa communities.

The partnership is also reimagining its needs assessment approach. The current community needs assessment methodology has resulted in meaningful community engagement and profound impact, but the cadence of information-gathering is slow, given the overall methodological rigor. CARE and Cargill are realigning the needs assessment tools and methods with the She Feeds the World framework, assessing community needs across the outcome areas in which the partnership seeks to create change. Also, data collection methods are evolving from paper-based collection to digital-collection. These transformations of the needs assessment methodology will increase the pace of implementation while also creating greater alignment with our overall program objectives.

ENHANCE NUTRITION PROGRAMMING: Successful programs do not assume that greater availability of food—even nutritious food—or higher income automatically translates into improved nutrition. Providing nutrition education about diets for women, infants, and young children, and considering structural and relational norms that affect nutrition practices, must be in place. The partnership has recently partnered with sector thought-leaders like IDH to enhance our nutrition intervention in the current PROSPER Côte d’Ivoire programming.

BETTER M&E SYSTEMS: Phase one of the partnership highlighted areas requiring improvement in its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and ultimately resulted in increased investment over subsequent phases. We must invest in comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems as we design new programs. This entails building systems that allow us to monitor our processes, progress toward targets routinely, and learn quickly when our approaches are failing so that we address shortcomings early on. The partnership now has in-depth verifiable metrics for individual projects, key performance indicators for the partnership globally, and the capacity to use data for routine project improvement.

FORMALIZE PARTNERSHIPS AND INTEGRATE WITH GOVERNMENT PLANS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES: Long-lasting change in the cocoa sector can only be achieved through strong collaboration and coordination across stakeholders. Better multi-stakeholder engagement and coordination across existing initiatives can support in avoiding duplication of effort while also pooling resources for more significant impact. CARE is currently formalizing partnerships at local district assemblies and government agencies to promote sharing and improved coordination across other key actors, to harmonize interventions at a sector level and strengthen working group dialogues among those actors. CARE and Cargill must work to leverage resources from and create synergies with existing and new partners, including the private sector and government. Doing so will ensure improved sustainability of our actions, greater distribution of resources to priority needs like community infrastructure, and alignment of collective interventions with national standards and policies.

IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, LEARNING, AND COMMUNICATIONS: CARE and Cargill prioritize sharing information, telling our story effectively, and applying our learnings to refine our programming approaches. Connecting projects with similar focuses and goals can facilitate learning and improvement rooted from each other’s successes and challenges, while also creating new approaches to development issues. Over the last 12 years, CARE and Cargill have improved the partnership’s knowledge management, learning, and communications strategies, to better foster dialogue and learning between project teams and address shortcomings and gaps through further research and innovation. The partnership should also focus on the transfer of learnings and successful innovations within the programs across Cargill’s network of businesses.

COMMIT TO ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE: Sustained commitment to climate change adaptation and risk management activities over the long term is critical, given the severity of the impact of climate change on small-scale food producers. The effects of climate change have created crop production challenges for farmers; however, CARE and Cargill’s cross-cutting programming has increased the resiliency of rural communities and improved their ability to adapt to climate change. Despite unpredictable climate patterns and widespread production loss across the Ghanaian cocoa sector during PROCOCO, farmers were able to mitigate decreases in production. Farmers not associated with PROCOCO observed twice as much production loss. With that said, farmers are facing new climate-related challenges each year and will need to refine their climate change management strategies as weather patterns become increasingly variable.



EMPOWER COMMUNITIES FOR LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT: Over the course of more than a decade of partnership, CARE’s and Cargill’s focus on sustainable, long-term change and development has sharpened. Activities have, and should continue to, become more integrated over time using approaches that empower women and vulnerable groups for sustained, community-led development. Programs are intentionally linking nutrition, food security, agricultural productivity, income, education, market linkages, and women’s voice to provide durable solutions to the complex circumstances surrounding poverty in Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, and around the world. Programs should continue to, but also improve upon, building conditions and linkages that empower communities to continue activities, and to design programs with thoughtful sustainability, continuance and exit plans in place. CARE and Cargill should build on their knowledge to continue implementing activities that are known to sustainable, such as VSLAs.

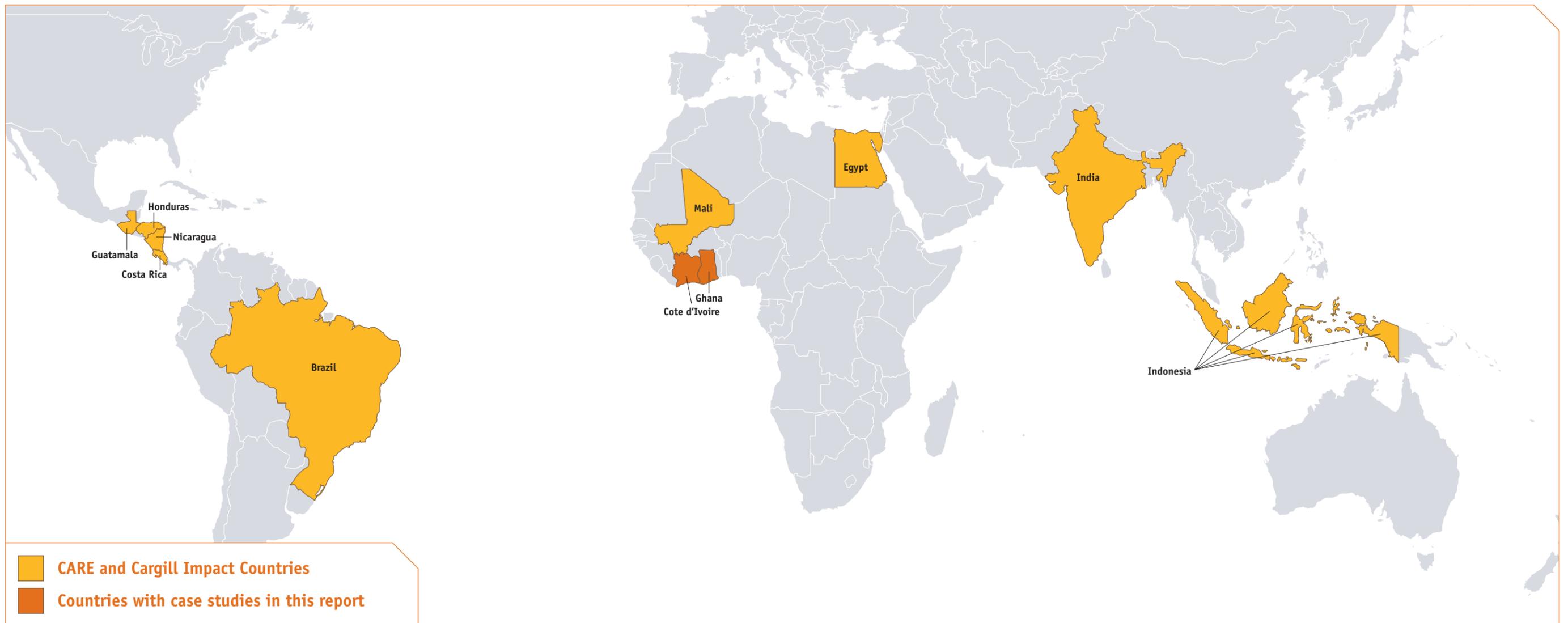
What’s Next?

The evidence in this report underscores that the Cargill and CARE partnership has demonstrated true impact over the last decade-plus. Farmers have reported more significant access to financial services, increased income, reduced food insecurity, increased resiliency, and empowerment for women and men. They have applied what they have learned to maintain and expand their businesses, ultimately increasing their production and incomes. Our holistic approach and livelihoods focus over the past decade has led to greater food security in cocoa communities. And CARE and Cargill have contributed to communities’ ability to address the worst forms of child labor, promote education, strengthen health systems, and improve WASH infrastructure. Families have demonstrated increased capacity to manage climate-related stresses, and communities have accessed greater assets, financial capital, and services to provide them with a safety net in the event of unforeseen shocks and stresses.

The current phase of programming, PROSPER II, builds on lessons learned from previous phases of our partnership, and places women at the heart of its interventions. PROSPER II draws from CARE's She Feeds the World (SfTW) framework – an integrative approach to food and nutrition security, as well as from Cargill Cocoa Promise goal to enhance Community Wellbeing through a strategic action plan. SfTW not only emphasizes access to critical inputs like water, land, seeds, finance, and access to markets but also includes an explicit focus on nutrition, safety nets, and social protection in times of crisis. Critically, SfTW puts women's empowerment at the heart of everything we do, working directly with women to strengthen their skills and confidence in sustainable agriculture practices, financial inclusion, market engagement, gender equality, and food and nutrition security – while also engaging with men and boys to support efforts for greater equality. To continue to push the envelope on high-quality programming, SfTW harnesses cutting-edge research and innovation. Evidence-based tools and practices link women to resources and markets, improve family nutrition, and break down the barriers that trap small-scale women producers and their families in poverty. SfTW goes beyond productivity and emphasizes the importance of cultivating equality. CARE and Cargill continue to use evidence from research and innovation to build strategic partnerships and advocacy and influencing strategies to fuel structural changes and scale up proven approaches to improve women's food and nutrition security.

Cargill's [Community Wellbeing Strategic Action Plan](#) complements CARE's SfTW framework, providing a concrete roadmap to achieving stronger, more resilient cocoa communities and to enhancing the safety and wellbeing of children and families in cocoa farming areas. Cargill is engaging its direct and indirect supply chain, monitoring and reporting on progress, and leveraging the power of partnerships to create a thriving cocoa sector. Cargill Cocoa & Chocolate believes that investing in farming communities is an investment in the future. By providing farm workers with healthcare services, educating the next generation of farmers to a high standard, working to identify and prevent child labor, and giving women more access to economic opportunities, we are creating a safety net for cocoa farmers living in precarious conditions – and an opportunity to strengthen their socio-economic resilience. Such interventions also improve farm productivity, helping to secure cocoa supplies for generations to come.

Throughout the last decade, CARE and Cargill have joined forces, leveraging the best of our respective approaches, capacities, and resources, to reach thousands of farmers to help them build better lives, provide knowledge and capacity building, improve agriculture practices, and address severe gender inequity. As we enter our second decade of strategic partnership, CARE and Cargill are building on our programming successes to drive significant impact, creating deep, long-term positive change for women, their families, and their communities.





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Founded in 1945 with the creation of the CARE Package, CARE is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty. CARE places special focus on working alongside poor girls and women because, equipped with the proper resources, they have the power to lift whole families and entire communities out of poverty. Last year CARE worked in 87 countries and reached 82 million people around the world. To learn more, visit www.care.org.

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