

UK Aid Match case study: CARE International on how to effectively build climate change resilience



Photo caption: Taji Azaria, participant in the UK Aid Match funded project Help Her Live Learn and Earn (HELP)

About the grant holder

CARE International is an international charity tackling systemic causes of poverty. Based in 104 countries, CARE provides both life-saving assistance when disaster strikes, and long-term programmes to deliver lasting change. Central to CARE's programmatic approach is women's empowerment as they believe that poverty and inequality are inextricably linked, and that by empowering women whole families and communities can be lifted out of poverty.

In 2018, CARE International UK received a grant from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) through UK Aid Match for a project titled 'Help Her Live Learn and Earn' (HELP). Spanning over two years, the project aimed to create equitable, climate-resilient farming communities where women are empowered, natural resources are sustainably managed, and households have increased production. Adopting a gender transformative approach and based on proven interventions, CARE aimed to support poor small-scale farmers and their families in rural northern Tanzania to enhance income and food and nutrition security.

In total, the project benefited 2,567 farmers, through the formation of Farmer Field and Business Schools (FFBS), gender dialogues and sensitisation meetings with male champions and community-based trainers, water user groups and farmers groups. In order to build sustainability and capacity for integrating the recommended climate resilience actions into district plans and budgets, the partnership with the District Council ensured decision makers

were engaged in community scorecard and other consultation meetings, and their field teams involved in delivery of all activities.

How have project inputs effectively built climate change resilience?

The project built climate resilience through climate smart agriculture (CSA) inputs such as effective management of water resources, rehabilitation of irrigation channels, CSA specific training and advocating to district authorities to implement CSA. A needs analysis was conducted with community partners and project participants using a participatory tool developed by CARE called Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis¹ (CVCA). CVCA helped the local communities to identify climate-related challenges and community actions and resources that could help address climate risk, for example the promotion of drought resistance crops such as lablab and establishing community cohesion through water user groups (WUGs) that managed limited water available for irrigation during drought periods. This helped communities sustainably manage crop productivity to build resilience against climate-related events. The CSA activities led to increased yields for onions by up to 476%. Additionally, the project reduced the number of food insecure households during the seasonal food shortage months (October-December), from 20% at baseline to 1.4% at endline.

What challenges did CARE International face while implementing Help Her Live, Learn and Earn (HELP) project?

As the project participants spent the first year learning from training provided, adoption of CSA activities primarily took place in the second year of the project. Monitoring any improvements to yields was challenging as farmers were still adopting and implementing climate smart agricultural practices. Thus, a two-year project cycle proved to be limiting to fully achieve the productivity gains expected from CSA training. The short project timeline also limited the project team's ability to embed women's empowerment and CSA activities into district planning budget cycles. Additionally, the region was impacted by prolonged dry spells, severe flooding in April-May 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic. These events increased food prices and collapsed local markets. This required the project team to adapt activities to further combat these seasonal events and the pandemic and thus making the results that were achieved even more impressive.

What mitigation strategies were used to overcome the challenges and how were they selected?

In order to support communities on impact of COVID-19, the project ensured hygiene awareness messages were disseminated. In response to the April-May 2020 floods, the district disaster and risk committee conducted a rapid assessment in order to identify displaced households for cash distribution to provide immediate support. When travelling was restricted due to flooding or COVID-19, cash was distributed through M-Pesa, a mobile phone-based

¹ <https://CAREclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/CARE-CVCA-Handbook-EN-v0.8-web.pdf>

money transfer service. The Farmer Field and Business Schools also trained participating farmers about available CSA technologies, and importance of using the weather forecasting information from the Tanzania Meteorological Agency, that would support them to recover from the floods and drought.

CARE's Resilience Marker tool² was used by the project team to self-assess resilience within the project. The tool provides a starting point for further reflection on integrating climate change resilience throughout the project cycle. The findings from the tool informed CARE about areas that could help deal with these challenges in future, particularly engaging government systems and structures to support farmers to build their resilience to future drought or flooding (e.g. through incorporating gender and CSA into development planning and budgets, accessing seasonal forecast information).

What did you learn from this experience? And how did this learning inform your other projects?

A key learning from the HELP project was to account for climate-related challenges from the start and include it proactively during project design using the CVCA. Additionally, addressing women's empowerment in budget planning, particularly in relation to climate change resilience activities, has been an important benefit, as it supported women to become more involved in household and community decision making during times of climate-related events, ensuring that their views, needs and understanding of local dynamics was incorporated.

The above-mentioned learnings have already informed subsequent projects in Tanzania, and the Ministry of Agriculture are interested in implementing the HELP project inputs in other parts of the country. For example, information on how to develop community water user groups has been used by public authorities in other districts.

What are your top tips for an organisation facing similar challenges of including climate change resilience in their ongoing projects?

- **Plan for climate resilience.** Having an organisational climate change resilience strategy is useful. A risk register specific to climate change from the start of a project is useful to monitor and mitigate climate-related risks.
- **Support authorities to budget for climate resilience.** The Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis process helped the project to feed climate resilience activities into budget planning at district level. This ensures sustainability of climate resilience measures, that are not dependent on a project and can be funded through government processes.
- **Operationalise climate change resilience at multiple levels.** The project worked across different levels to ensure each was providing a positive and supportive context for the other in terms of climate change resilience. At the local level, this involved engaging

² <https://CAREclimatechange.org/CAREs-resilience-marker/>

with women, farmers and Farmer Field and Business schools; at community level by developing management structures such as community water management committees; and at district level by strengthening district administrations' capacity on climate change legislation. The project was designed such that it strengthens a local and national policy environment supportive of climate change resilience.

- **A focus on women's empowerment is critical to climate resilience.** Women's negotiation skills can be strengthened through the creation of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) via training and collective bargaining power. Engaging men and community leaders was also vital to mainstream gender into climate change planning happening at district level.

What resources did you use (if any) which may help others in a similar situation?

- Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA) tool – A participatory tool to conduct need assessment at community level: <https://CAREclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/CARE-CVCA-Handbook-EN-v0.8-web.pdf>
- CARE's Climate Change Resilience Strategy – <https://CAREclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Increasing-Resilience-Guidance-Note-EN.pdf>
- CARE's Resilience Marker tool – The tool helps integrate climate resilience in project design: <https://CAREclimatechange.org/CAREs-resilience-marker/>