



# End Line Report

## Mali Pathways (Nyéléni) : Final Evaluation

**OVERVIEW** This report presents findings from the Pathways Mali end line evaluation conducted in January 2016. The evaluation uses a global framework developed for use in Mali, as well as selected regions of Ghana, India, Malawi, and Tanzania where the Pathways program is also being implemented.

### Background

#### Mali

Farming, livestock-rearing, and aquaculture are central to Mali's economy. 83% of Malians earn a living from agriculture, and the sector makes up 38 percent of gross domestic product. Growth in agriculture, however, is largely limited to cash crops and state-run agribusinesses. Smallholder farmers are especially vulnerable to drivers of change in Malian agriculture, as a growing population is putting pressure on land and water, and the climate appears to be shifting toward less rainfall and longer dry seasons.

Currently, women smallholders make up 30% of the labor force in rain-fed agriculture and 100% for irrigated vegetable gardens. Despite women's significant contributions to agriculture, Mali's patriarchal society has restricted them from significant gains in the sector. Women's workloads serve as a major barrier to their agricultural productivity, with responsibilities ranging from laboring on husbands' or fathers' fields, care-giving and preparing meals at home, collecting water, firewood and wild foods (to supplement diets), cleaning, and managing large households. Even when women are able to get access to land, it is often of poor quality and they lack the financial resources, inputs, or support to improve its productivity.

#### Pathways Program

CARE Mali's Nyéléni initiative was designed to use the Pathways model to build on strategic entry points for gender and agricultural development. Research on environmentally sound farming techniques, laws and policies which commit government resources to

**Nearly three-quarter of both female and male participants believe their household is better off after participating in Pathways activities**

agriculture and women farmers and the strength of women's collectives in many of the communities in which CARE operates all present opportunities for agricultural development in Mali.

Nyéléni was implemented in 106 villages of Segou and Mopti regions. The overall objective of Nyéleni was to enable more productive and more equitable participation of selected segments of poor women smallholders in sustainable agriculture within the livelihood systems, and to contribute to their empowerment. The initiative directly impacted 15,000 rural women from extremely poor households, as well as other members of their households, with indirect impacts on people from similar households in the intervention area through diffusion of impact, transfer of lessons, and achievement of key anticipated breakthroughs.

Key Interventions that made up the initiative include :

- Supporting collectives and community groups, especially women's support and solidarity groups, functional agricultural interest groups, VSLAs, smallholder producer groups and other agricultural development stakeholder groups.
- Promoting the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, as well as joint ventures with the private sector, and achievement of quality standards for selected products. This approach drew on the Ecoferme package which encompasses non-tillage and fertilizer micro-dosage; erosion control; zero-grazing; small irrigation; integrated management of vegetable nutrients; multi-use conservation areas; and diversification of crop varieties. The initiative also established a cadre of extension workers to serve as a resource for farmers.
- Developing more inclusive and efficient markets, based on a value chain approach to market analysis. Establishing an advisory board of technical specialists, consisting of leaders from producer associations and women entrepreneurs in target

areas, to provide technical guidance and build capacity to expand the initiative into other sectors.

- Utilization of action research to facilitate social change, engagement of power holders to solidify social change and acceptance of women farmers
- Strengthening of agricultural service provision with a focus on microfinance and extension services
- A review of the application and efficiency of legal frameworks and policies that promote more equitable access to land and other valuable assets.

## What we Have Accomplished ?

### KEY SUMMARIES

**20%** Increase in total household income

Increase in farm household income **43%**

- Average monthly household income increased by nearly 20%. The effect was more dramatic for female-headed holds, with a percentage increase of almost 240%. Farm income for all households increased by 43%. In female headed households the percentage increase was nearly 300%. At the endline income for women in male-headed households quadrupled.
- According to CARE's Women's Empowerment Index, the number of empowered women nearly tripled, from 2.5 % to 6.7%. The average women's empowerment score also went up by 43%.
- The number of women who solely or jointly control household assets went up nearly five times, from 7% to 34%. Similarly, women's control over land has increased by 2.5 times between base and end line periods. However, land ownership for women is still problematic in Mali because they are not legally allowed to own official land titles.



**“There has been a change in our communications, because we have family discussions over tea. Now there is some change in decision-making, because in the past our husbands would make decisions on their own, now they consult with us.”**

- The gap between men and women in asset control has been cut nearly in half, and the gap in control over productive decisions has gone down by 25%.
- The number of families adopting negative coping strategies dropped by 42%.
- Mobility for women more than doubled since the base line period, but is still only at 11%.
- Using improved agricultural techniques, yields on millet went up 46%, and on sorghum 34%. Additionally, the number of households reporting food shortages dropped from 30% at the base line to 19% at the end line.

## How did we get there?

### KEY POINTS

- **Increase women’s access to credit:** 56% of women listed this as the most effective part of the program. In a context where formal microfinance comes at interest rates of more than 14%, and opportunities are increasingly restricted, VSLAs are one of the few sources of credit women have. The percentage of women who have access to agricultural loans increased by 80% between base and end line periods.
- **Improve communication:** Both women and men indicated that they enjoyed activities introduced by Pathways which focused on communication. They also noted that such activities have had a profound impact on the way they interact now.
- **Encourage community participation among women :** Group membership for women went up 13%, and the support of groups—as well as the platform for gender dialogues—gave women space to address their concerns.
- **Assist women in confidence building :** Between base and end line periods the percentage of women that were comfortable with public speaking increased by 54%.
- **Community Involvement:** The Participatory Performance Tracker was very effective in getting communities involved in self-assessment. It also allowed community members to examine what the data meant to them. Finally, it got community members thinking about how they could use the results of their data analysis to alter their behaviors and tailor requests to the government or CARE about their needs.
- **Engage men:** The Personal Participatory Performance Tracker gives men a chance to examine their behavior around gender equality. It has also put staff and communities into the same space of behavior change. This has proven effective in ensuring positive behavior change among men, as it pertains to gender equality. It has also provided men with an avenue to support each other.



- **Increase women’s access to extension services:** Women’s ability to access extension workers and information more than tripled, from 20.3% to 62.5%
- **Encourage innovative community saving strategies:** Many communities started cereal banks, where they could take no-interest loans of food to help fill in gaps when food was scarce.

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#### CARE USA

151 Ellis St., Atlanta, Georgia 30033  
[pathways@care.org](mailto:pathways@care.org)  
 T: +1404.376.2566  
[www.carepathwaystoempowerment.org](http://www.carepathwaystoempowerment.org)

#### CARE Mali

Rue 110, Porte 368, Korofina Nord T,  
 Bamako  
 T: + (223) 20 24 22 62  
[Mamadou.coulibably@co.care.org](mailto:Mamadou.coulibably@co.care.org)

