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She Grows the Future

A project carried out with support from the L'Oréal Foundation





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Project Presentation

With limited access to resources and means of subsistence, like land ownership, women are highly vulnerable to climate change. Current gender inequalities are exacerbated in a changing climate, and the occurrence of forced displacement and increased gender-based violence pose a significant threat to women's rights. In particular, structural inequalities hinder women's access to knowledge and economic resources needed to build their resilience and adaptive capacity.

She Grows the Future was an ambitious initiative implemented by CARE with the financial support of L'Oréal Foundation with two fundamental objectives: the fight against climate change and the creation of gender equality. She Grows the Future recognized the transformative role of women in agricultural settings and fostered their resilience to the effects of climate change. From 2021 to 2024, the project empowered over 8,000 women farmers across 4 countries: Ecuador, Madagascar, India, and Vietnam. To achieve this, the program was built around 3 action strands: **Awareness-raising**, **Action in the field**, and **Advocacy and Research**.

“Food insecurity caused by climate change is also projected to increase by close to 240 million more women and girls, compared to 131 million more men and boys” (UN WOMEN 2023)

Awareness-raising designed and delivered an international communication campaign to sensitize project communities and the general public on the linkages between climate change and gender inequalities.

Action in the field brought together various initiatives to strengthen the adaptive capacities of women farmers and promote their autonomy. It improved food security and nutrition, and diversified sources of income to increase women’s resilience to climate change by providing educational training. Moreover, it developed the financial management skills of women-led cooperatives, savings, and credit groups. These initiatives were complemented by gender dialogues and awareness-raising campaigns that involved men and boys. Finally, community adaptation plans were drawn to create consciousness among local authorities and influence national policies to promote gender equality.

In the **Advocacy and Research** action strand, CARE collaborated with the Stockholm Environment Institute to study the barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making and identify levers for greater equality and inclusion. Results were published in the [Beyond a seat at the table](#) study report.

A three-dimensional project

She Grows the Future's uniqueness lies in its three-dimensional and gender cross-cutting approach, which was incorporated from the launch of the project in 2021. This integrative focus has impacts on multiple levels. It is built together with the communities on the ground, transforming their social realities; it also seeks a substantial change by incorporating the institutional dimension through the awareness-raising and advocacy action strands, fostering learning from practice and influencing decision-making. Therefore, She Grows the Future did not only work on the roots of change, but also on the framework for it, ensuring that transformations were sustained and developed on a large scale.

Climate Awareness

CARE has great experience setting climate change and its ties with gender inequalities in the public agenda. This expertise was applied through multiple campaigns and events linked to the project’s objectives and activities.

During the UN Women’s ‘Generation Equality Voices’ Festival 2021, CARE delivered a webinar on the role of women in tackling the climate crisis. This webinar raised awareness of the **under-representation of women and girls in decision-making bodies working for climate justice**. In 2022, CARE participated in the COP27 in Egypt, where key demands calling for more gender-just climate action were presented ([CARE Position Paper for COP27](#)). That same year, and with the support of Foundation L’Oréal, CARE launched the awareness campaign [Climate change is sexist](#), which created a leverage effect on the mobilization of the public. Through social networks and collaboration with influencers and other media actors, the campaign highlighted how women’s vulnerabilities and challenges are exacerbated by climate change. The campaign also encouraged the public to support a new generation of women and girls who have found creative and inspiring ways to adapt to the changing climate by showcasing their stories ([GenADAPT](#)).

“3A” CIRCLE APPROACH



Finally, in 2023 CARE joined the COP28 in Dubai to increase public attention and reaffirm its recommendations on the need for gender-just adaptation ([CARE Position Paper COP28](#)). The [Climate Justice and Gender Capacity Statement](#), published in 2023, used CARE's great experience in project implementation and L'Oréal's insightful view on the private sector to propose recommendations to remove the economic barriers encountered by small-scale women producers.



Climate Action

She Grows the Future was a community-based adaptation project aiming to “empower women farmers in Ecuador, Madagascar, India, and Vietnam, helping them to adopt sustainable, resilient and equitable agricultural practices while increasing their share of voice within their communities.” (Foundation L’Oréal 2023). The project focused on disseminating climate-resilient agricultural practices across the four countries to increase climate change adaptation while **placing marginalized rural women as agents of change**.

This was achieved through multiple initiatives. Field schools run by women leader farmers provided

training on agroecology and sustainable and resilient agricultural practices to other local female producers, increasing their adaptative capacities. On top of that, the creation of seed banks with climate and stress-resistant crop varieties diversified and improved food and household incomes.

In addition, She Grows the Future increased women's power of influence and decision-making in household finances by facilitating access to financial services. Some examples include the creation of savings credit groups and women-led cooperatives. Finally, the project focused on creating a more favorable political and social environment for gender equality. This was done by improving family dialogue and fostering the active participation of women in local decision-making processes.

Climate Advocacy

The final component of the project consisted of research and advocacy work carried out in collaboration with the Stockholm Environment Institute Asia Center. Results were compiled in the [Beyond a seat at the table](#) report, which focuses on the obstacles and enablers to gender equality in climate adaptation decision-making at the local, community, national, and international levels. The report provides clear recommendations for political actors and civil society organizations to encourage learning from this practical experience. Recommendations for action are given on obstacles related to capacities, policies governance, and social norms.

Launch of the Miranga Project in Madagascar
• Feb 2021

Launch of the Mujeres Rurales Andinas Project in Ecuador
• Mar2021

Public Awareness Campaign Climate Change is sexist

Experience sharing meeting in Paris

Launch of the Shakti Project in India
• Mar 2021

'Generati on Equality Voices Festival'

COP 27 Key demands for more Gender-just climate action
• Nov 2022

COP 28 Raising public awareness and recommendations for gender-just adaptation
• Nov 2023

2021

2022

2023

Zoom In Per Country

This section presents the achievements of the She Grows the Future project across the four countries of implementation.

MIRANGA – Madagascar

In Madagascar, 75% of the population lives below the poverty line, suffering from food insecurity. The country relies greatly on agriculture and faces issues like declining soil fertility, natural disasters, and a lack of resources for farmers. In the face of climate change, droughts and torrential rains are expected to increase ([IPCC 2022](#)), exacerbating the obstacles small-scale producers already face. In addition, pre-existing gender inequalities reduce access to food for women and girls, with discriminatory norms and obstacles in land management and inheritance. The MIRANGA project in the Boeny region aims to increase resilience among marginalized rural women against climate risks and involve them in decision-making processes. By 2024, the project supported **3,142 female farmers**. Project activities covered the following areas:



- **Disaster Risk Reduction:** Training for Local Rescue Teams improved the preparedness and response during events like Cyclone Cheneso in 2023. Furthermore, the installation of limnimetric beacons helped communities monitor rising water levels, benefiting around 6,000 people.
- **Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security:** The program has facilitated the adoption of sustainable farming practices through Champs École Paysan (CEP), with 40% of farmland in beneficiary households now using these methods. Nutrition education and support for Village Savings and Credit Associations (AVEC for its acronym in French) have enhanced food security and financial stability for rural women, promoting better food hygiene, school attendance for children, and access to healthcare.

Mujeres Rurales Andinas Productoras frente al Cambio Climático - Ecuador



In Ecuador, climate change is intensifying food insecurity, particularly in the Cotopaxi and Chimborazo provinces, where glaciers have shrunk significantly, causing reduced rainfall, droughts, and increased soil erosion. These changes are impacting agricultural and livestock production, altering harvest times, and threatening the food security of rural communities. Women are disproportionately affected due to existing gender inequalities, which limit their access to resources and decision-making roles. Inequalities in land ownership, access to credit, and job insecurity are omnipresent. The program **has empowered over 2,115 rural women in these regions**, making them central to the adaptation process. The specific achievements are:

- **Escuela Agroecológica:** The School of Agroecology, established in Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, and Bolívar, has trained 946 participants, including 686 women, in climate-resilient farming techniques. The project also facilitated the creation of 18 business plans and seven community savings and credit cooperatives, involving 126 people. Local networks for natural resource protection were established, focusing on participatory water management and ecosystem restoration.
- **Local Public Policy Development:** The project developed three [Provincial Agendas for Women and Climate Change](#), involving 871 participants, 78% of whom were women. These agendas address gender equality, ecosystem preservation, and community resilience, and have been disseminated widely as advocacy tools via workshops and the publication of the Agenda's official document. The project also proposed agroecology ordinances for local governments, institutionalizing gender equality and resilience at the community level.

Enhancement of Food Security for Ethnic Minorities (EFSEM) – Vietnam

Ethnic minorities in Vietnam, which make up 14.6% of the population at the national level and 52% of the poor population, are highly vulnerable to food insecurity due to their reliance on agriculture and forestry. In Lai Chau province, traditional farming practices allow only one annual rice harvest for over 50% of fields. Climate change worsens economic disparities with deforestation, landslides, and flash floods causing farmland loss and crop failures. Women from ethnic minorities face limited mobility, low literacy, and lack of decision-making power. The project **has empowered**

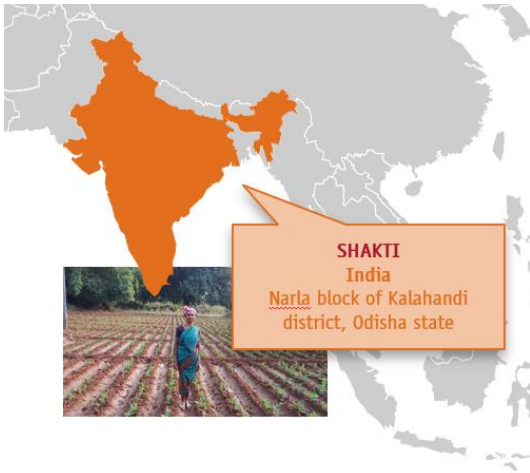
1,117 female farmers through knowledge-sharing and resilient practices for better equality and food security. Project activities included:



- **Village Savings Loans Association (VSLA):** The project established 44 VSLAs with 1,025 members, including 832 women. These groups provide access to financial resources at reasonable interest rates, and regular training enhances financial autonomy. VSLAs also facilitate information sharing and community management.
- **Adoption of Coping Strategies:** Families developed action plans to mitigate extreme weather risks, such as vaccinating animals, storing feed, and improving farm hygiene. Training in weather forecast interpretation helped farmers better plan activities, improving food security and economic stability by enhancing their ability to anticipate and adapt to climatic challenges.

SHAKTI – India

In India, climate change is intensifying food insecurity and poverty among small-scale and marginalized farmers, who make up nearly 55% of the population. Ethnic minorities and rural women are the most affected, with limited access to climate-resilient agricultural technologies. Global warming exacerbates issues like water scarcity, floods, and droughts. Women, who play a key role in farming, are often excluded from agricultural groups and subsidies, lacking technology and support. **CARE has strengthened the resilience of 2,018 women farmers**, giving them the means to cope with food insecurity and climate change via:



- **Farmer Field School (FFS):** The project provided training for 391 women in practices like organic pesticides and vermicomposting. The project also issued progress cards to 1,000 farmers, helping to cut costs and boost profits. Community infrastructure such as composting units, seed banks, and agri-kiosks were introduced to support traditional and organic farming.
- **Market Infrastructure:** The project registered 391 women on the e-NAM app, an electronic trading portal for agricultural commodities of India, providing crucial information on sales, prices, and weather. With training, market boards in 20 villages, and equipment like weighing machines and moisture meters in 10 villages improved

market access and negotiation for women farmers.

Summary

Project implementation has highlighted the importance of fluid, transparent communication with communities. Language barriers and the low participation of men in gender dialogues sometimes limit the effectiveness of training and the adoption of new standards. To address this, it was crucial to develop multilingual and visual training materials, as well as to plan sessions taking into account men's economic activities. In addition, the socio-political tensions that disrupted certain aspects of the project also demonstrated the need to maintain regular dialogue with new administrations, put in place risk management plans, and collaborate with local academic institutions to ensure sustainable gender transformation.

The “3A approach”, combining **Climate Awareness, Climate Action** and **Climate Advocacy**, has institutionalized the changes needed for climate adaptation. This model has fostered large-scale communication on the climate challenges local communities face, strengthening the sustainability of the changes. Awareness-raising campaigns have influenced public policy by integrating climate justice and gender issues. By **empowering 8,000 women farmers across Ecuador, Madagascar, India and Vietnam**, the program has improved food security and household incomes, strengthened their decision-making power, and facilitated their access to financial services. Moreover, by fostering an inclusive dialogue involving men and boys, the program has encouraged just attitudes towards gender and climate issues, illustrating a comprehensive and effective approach to tackling climate challenges and gender inequalities while influencing community practices and public policies.

With support from Foundation L'Oréal and the Agence française de Développement, **a new phase of She Grows the Future is underway (2024-2027)**, increasing opportunities for women and contributing to a fairer and climate-adapted future.



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For further information on the program, please contact:

- Marie Leroy | Asia / Latin America Program Desk Manager & Climate Change Advisor, CARE France | leroy@carefrance.org
- Thuy-Binh Nguyen | Program Quality Lead, CARE Climate Justice Center | nguyen@carefrance.org
- Or visit our website: [Carefrance.org](https://carefrance.org)

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