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Women from the Matu Masu Dubara Network of Tam (Diffa, Niger) with Aminatou Galadima, Women Lead Manager, CARE Niger

Women Lead in Emergencies supports local women's groups to take a lead in responding to the crises that affect them and their communities. It is the first practical toolkit for frontline CARE staff and partners with guidance on how to promote women's participation and leadership in humanitarian settings.

Why women's participation is a priority

Women and girls are hardest hit by conflict, disasters and emergencies:



When food is short, women and girls eat last, and least.



They are more likely to miss out on education.



They are at much greater risk of sexual violence.



They are the first to lose their jobs and livelihoods.



They have less access to life-saving maternal health services.



They take on even more responsibilities as caregivers – and not just for their own family, but for others, too.

Yet most women affected by crisis have little or no influence over decisions that affect their lives.

Women have the right to a say

Women are currently excluded from most humanitarian responses – which means they do not have a say in identifying what their needs are and deciding how best to meet them. When women's voices are not heard, humanitarian responses can reinforce gender inequality, and even cause harm to women and girls.



Women's lack of participation in humanitarian responses 'severely limits our effectiveness', according to the UN.¹



Yet local women's organisations are not consulted in nearly half of all humanitarian responses.²



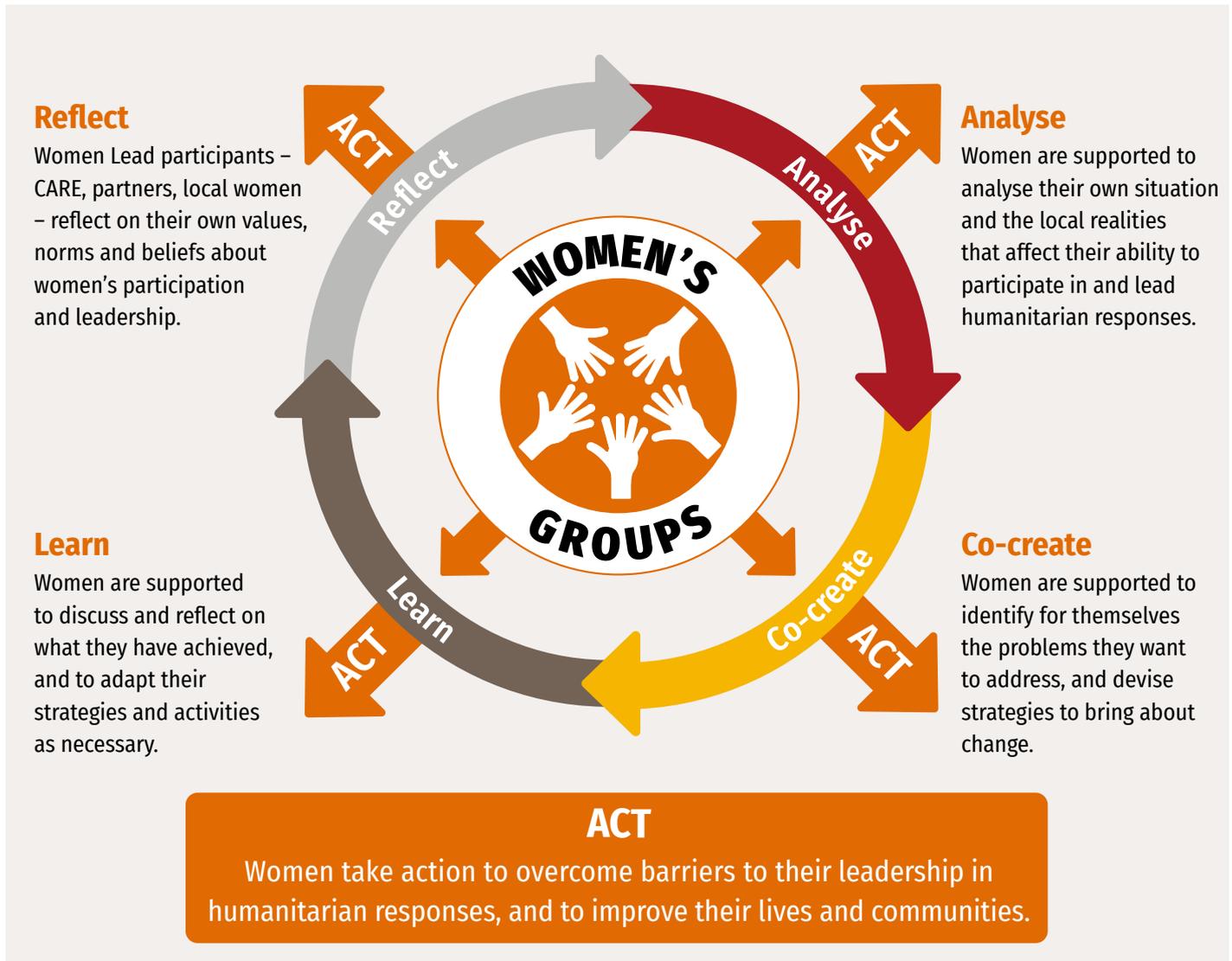
In the global COVID-19 response, women make up 70% of the health workforce – but hold only 5% of the leadership positions.³



Less than 0.1% of COVID-19 funding has gone to local NGOs, and women-led organisations have received an even smaller share of this money.⁴

References: 1. UN Women (2015) / 2. IASC Gender Accountability Framework Report (2018) / 3. Global Health 50/50 Report (2020) / 4. Charter4Change statement (May 2020)

Women Lead provides a 5-step model for working with poor, marginalised women so that they can take a lead in responding to the disasters and emergencies that affect their communities.

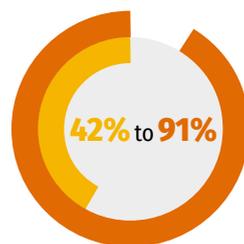


Women Lead in action

In Omugo settlement in Uganda, Women Lead supported groups of refugee women to identify issues that affect their lives and their own strategies to address them. Together, women’s groups decided to:

- Prioritise adult literacy classes, financial and business skills training, and mental health and psychosocial support, as urgent barriers to women’s leadership.
- Hold a Women’s Conference promoting peace and reconciliation between different ethnic groups.
- Organise a peaceful community boycott that persuaded UN Agencies to move a food distribution point closer to their village.
- Register the first women’s community-based organisation in the Omugo area.
- Stand in autumn 2020 for elections for Refugee Welfare Councils – the main representative body for refugees.

By the end of the project (Jan 2019 to April 2020):



Women’s confidence in their negotiation and communication skills increased from 42% to 91%.



Women’s ability to work with other women to achieve a common goal increased from 30% to 92%.

Find out more

CARE has piloted or is using the Women Lead model in Colombia, Niger, Mali, Philippines, Tonga, and Uganda. It’s being used in all types of emergency, from natural disasters to protracted crises, from conflict settings to global health pandemics.

To find out more: please contact the CARE Women Lead Global Coordinators
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