



Food System & Livelihoods

in Nigeria



Despite its vast agricultural potential and diverse value chains, Nigeria ranks 103rd out of 121 countries on the Global Hunger Index. Nearly 25 million people—about 13 per cent of the overall Nigerian population—were expected to experience food insecurity in 2023. Nigeria's agricultural system is outdated and lacks quality inputs, such as quality seeds, fertilizer, irrigation, and agricultural extension services. Further, agriculture is dominated by small-scale farmers who often lack information, skills, and the resources they need to improve their productivity, ensure sustainability, and connect with markets.

CARE leverages its extensive global programming experience with projects and interventions that strengthen food systems and improve health and nutrition outcomes for populations, particularly women, adolescents, and children.

OUR APPROACH

Officially registered in April 2017, CARE's largest portfolio is Food Security, Nutrition, and Livelihoods. In line with its dual mandate, CARE Nigeria's Food Security and Nutrition strategy

promotes a combination of interventions in both emergency and development contexts, aimed at delivering critical lifesaving, life-building, and life-sustaining services while mainstreaming gender-transformative approaches. Activities predominantly focus on food security assistance, nutrition support, and emergency livelihoods, strengthened through locally-led approaches that foster community participation, ownership, and sustainability. CARE has strengthened the social fabric in areas where it operates, leveraging women's networks to drive development and respond to emergencies.

Food Assistance

Food assistance is a key intervention for Nigeria's emergency response, mainly focused on the crisis-affected north-eastern states. Approaches include food assistance as well as in-kind and cash-based transfers. CARE has trained women to lead distribution processes and participate in food-distribution committees, demonstrating their capacity to lead emergency responses.

Approaches

- Farmer Field Business School (FFBS)
- Village Savings and Lending in Emergencies (VSLaIE)
- VSLA+
- Water Smart Agriculture (WaSA)
- Women Leadership in Emergencies (WLiE)
- Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA)

Impact Groups

Pregnant and nursing women and girls

Children under five years

Donors

World Food Programme

Food and Agricultural Organization

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Nederland

Latter Day Saints (LDS)

CARE USA Emergency Response Fund

Pula

Nutrition

CARE Nigeria implements a combination of cutting-edge nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions. We build the capacity of and leverage community structures such as **Community-Based Nutrition Mobilizers** (CNM) and **Community Health Extension Workers** (CHEW) and work closely with Primary Health Centres (PHC) via **Mother-to-Mother Support Groups** (MTMSG). These serve as platforms for nutrition education and encourage healthy behaviour for women of reproductive age. The network of CNMs and CHEWs at the community level has also promoted good nutrition practices in one-on-one counselling sessions. These practices include exclusive breastfeeding, Maternal, Infant, and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN), and referrals for cases of severe acute malnutrition and at-risk mothers and infants' cases to outpatient therapeutic feeding programs, stabilization centres, and PHCs respectively.

CARE also engages fathers and influential men as male champions and employs gender approaches like **Social Analysis and Action** (SAA) to address negative social norms that reinforce negative nutrition practices and impact intra-household food distribution. CARE Nigeria promotes increased access and utilization of nutrient dense foods through homestead food production. In addition, CARE continues to make significant strides in influencing food and nutrition policies at federal and state governments to encourage healthy diets, foster nutrition resilience in communities, and ensure high quality nutrition service delivery.

Agriculture and Livelihoods

Nigeria has a diverse agro-climate that influences CARE's food security and livelihood development interventions. Northern parts of Nigeria are characterized by high temperatures and erratic rainfall patterns, resulting in climate-resilient approaches to agricultural production. The southern parts are wet, on the other hand, with some areas exhibiting rainforest weather patterns allowing for cash or high-value crops. Identification of operational areas has been informed by food, nutrition and livelihood needs, viability of value chains, and the prevailing climatic conditions to promote crop or livestock production.

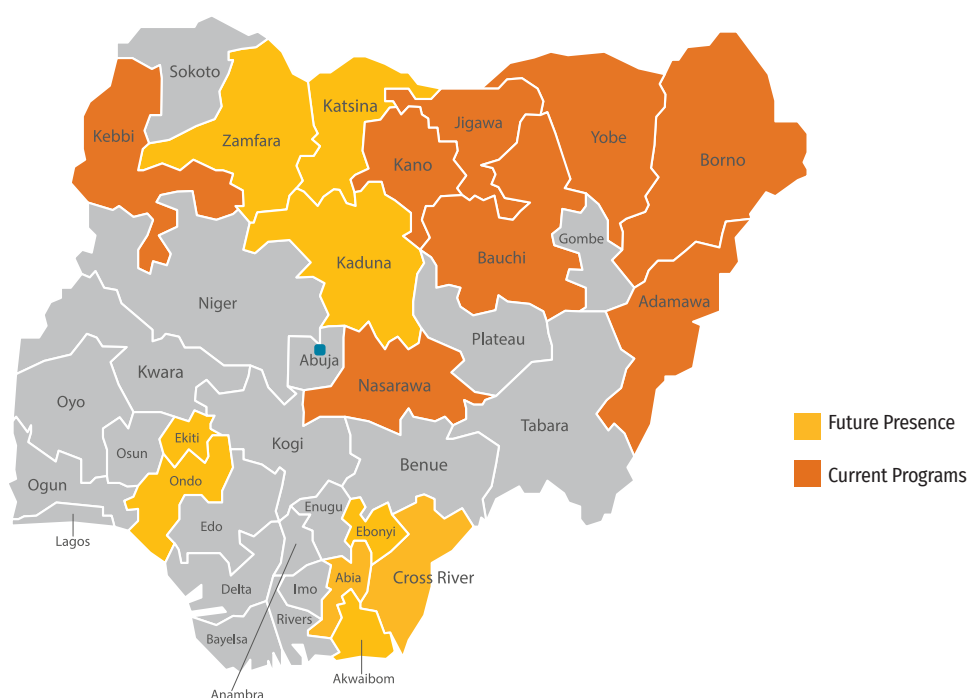


CARE has received overwhelming support from the government and academia on **Farmer Field Business Schools** (FFBS), an extension approach used in delivering multi-sectoral agricultural knowledge that drives successful production for increased community resilience.

The livelihoods development approach is centred on strengthening agricultural production systems and engaging participants in key agricultural value chains that present opportunities for growth and sustainability. To build community resilience in the face of shocks and stressors, CARE also promotes livelihood diversification including off-farm social enterprises for sustainable impact. CARE Nigeria's approach to livelihoods is gender transformative, all-inclusive, and climate resilient.



The livelihood strategy layers on existing social structures, including producers' groups and **Village Savings and Loans Associations** (VSLAs) that CARE believes are a sustainable driver of impact at scale. Through value chain assessments, CARE supports viable agricultural and non-agricultural value chains that empower women and youth. Private sector players, including micro-finance institutions, are engaged and linked to program participants to foster sustainable relationships, resulting in increased financial access and market participation. To protect the assets accumulated by its participants, CARE has engaged an insurance company, Pula, to develop a livestock insurance product that has been used by some VSLAs.



OUR PRESENCE

CARE currently works in Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Jigawa, Bauchi, Kebbi, Nasarawa, and Kogi, doing humanitarian and development interventions. Recently, CARE expanded into Ondo, Kwara, and Oyo states focusing on the cocoa and sorghum value chains, mainstreaming gender, child protection, and climate smart practices.

INNOVATIONS

CARE's engagement of **NAGIS, a financial service provider**, has made emergency response quicker and more seamless. Unlike the direct transfer from banks, the NAGIS platform provides comprehensive reports that can be accessed by donors. Also, CARE

2024–2030 Strategic Plan



Food Security & Livelihoods

Promote agricultural production

Economic empowerment of women (life & entrepreneurship skills, financial inclusion and networking)

Special measures for agriculturally active women

Advocacy for food & nutrition policies and budgets

Support contingency planning and the use of early warning systems along food systems and value chains

Impact Target:
2.7 million people

has piloted the Mikashboks Digital Savings platform with 50 VSLAs, enabling all group members and CARE to access group savings information.

LOOKING AHEAD

Over the next six years (2024-2030), CARE Nigeria will increase access to sufficient, safe, affordable, and nutritious food for 3.2 million people (with a focus on women and girls). Our programming will strengthen food systems to improve poor people's access to and use of nutritious food. This includes providing women with access to financial and productive assets while strengthening their life and business skills and their networks and entrepreneurial activities. Agricultural value chains and other small business ventures will increase incomes, enabling people to afford nutritional foods for themselves and their families.



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