



Strengthening the Economic Leadership of Rural Indigenous Women (Phase II)



PROJECT LOCATION: Eight communities of San Lucas Tolimán and three of San Andrés Semetabaj, both municipalities from Department of Sololá

PROJECT DURATION: 12 months

REPORTING PERIOD: January - December 2023

BUDGET: \$ 100,000.00

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I. Introduction

One of CARE Guatemala's main objectives is to achieve women's personal and economic empowerment, promoting gender equality and strengthening their access to new equitable opportunities for personal and comprehensive development through sustainable production systems, markets and inclusive and equitable public policies, which allow their participation and development as well as their families'.

II. Presentation

Within the framework of its **Food and Economic Justice for Women and Youth Program**, CARE Guatemala implemented the "Strengthening the Economic Leadership of Rural Indigenous Women -Phase II" project, with funds from the Peierls Foundation, executing actions in eleven communities from the municipalities of San Lucas Tolimán and San Andrés Semetabaj, department of Sololá.

CARE Guatemala presents results from the January 1 - December 31 2023 period, in which the scope of this intervention is reported, including comprehensive actions promoting access to differentiated conditions in favor of women victims and survivors of gender-based violence and indigenous women with limited economic resources, considering that out of 161 participants, 83% are women who became aware of gender limitation conditions in their environment and later, based on their new conditions, promoted decision-making in the family and community sphere.

The project was executed combining different approaches allowing to improve living conditions of participants and their families, mainly incorporating training topics and work sessions related to i. Personal empowerment (self-esteem, leadership, autonomous decision-making); ii. Economic empowerment (economic initiatives and income generation); iii. Effective influence to comply with policies and programs in favor of women's rights, all of which contributed to improving the participants' standard of living. The economic empowerment of women has been the main contributing factor for promoting gender equity and equality, allowing access to opportunities for comprehensive development, sustainable production systems, markets, and inclusive public policies which have promoted their participation and obtaining benefits for their economic development.

To contribute to income generation and for women's economic autonomy, actions were carried out to establish productive units and/or value chains, which strengthened their operations, working logistics, learning digital marketing, the services they promote as a business and strengthening their organizational capabilities for economic activities. Actions implemented promoted through the example of participants, led other participating women from the communities to empower themselves personally, demanding the fulfillment of their rights and opportunities, preventing in this manner, gender-based violence in all its aspects. At the same time, the project worked with the Advocacy School application, which strengthened women's voice and leadership, based on virtual mechanisms adapted to the participants' free time.

To **increase women's/young entrepreneurs' access to productive resources, good sustainable practices and income-generating tools for saving activities**, in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food,

MAGA, work sessions were carried out with technical assistance and/or field visits using a different methodologies approach implemented by CARE. Exchange of experiences, enterprise transformation (to produce oyster mushrooms, honey, wicker baskets, traditional woven fabric, raise broiler and laying hens, and tilapia and plant nurseries) as well as supplies were provided to promote an increase in their production.

With CARE's Village Savings and Loan Association, VSLA, methodology, women's organization for collective savings was promoted, including training sessions to operate savings groups and community loans, providing participants with a start-up kit for their group, improving their financial security through savings and access to credit, as well as the expansion of their collective and individual economic activities.

To facilitate **increasing the income of women participating in economic activities of inclusive markets (supply and demand)**, actions were carried out to identify digital marketing, where economic activities established corporate brands and materials that facilitated disseminating their production and promoting their products. As a result of strengthening their digital capacities, participants were able to create Facebook and WhatsApp Business accounts, as well as consolidate product catalogs for each business.

Economic empowerment fairs were held (in San Lucas Tolimán, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala City, and Sololá), where participants exhibited their products and generated new alliances, also allowing access to new and better markets at the local, departmental and national levels. As follow-up and sustainability actions of the project, a methodological transfer was made to COAPED¹ and MAGA technicians, who assumed a commitment to replicate these activities with other participating groups not related to the project's impact population.

III. Context Analysis

Sololá is in Guatemala's western region, indigenous population is a majority (96.5% self-identify as Maya-Kaqchikel, Maya-Tz'utujil or Maya-Kiche') and occupies second place among departments with a high percentage of poverty. A total of 40% of its residents live in extreme poverty and chronic malnutrition among children under 5 years of age reaches 60% on average, according to recent data (2021 and 2022). In the municipality of San Lucas Tolimán, 70.53% of its inhabitants are living in poverty and 26.28% in extreme poverty. In San Andrés Semetabaj, 30.95% of residents live in poverty and 13.1% in extreme poverty. The detrimental factors of recent years (COVID-19 pandemic, climate related disasters, and internal social problems) have caused among Guatemalan families, especially in this department, a worrying economic and social crisis, which has led to a reduction in employment opportunities and lack of access to health and education services (URL, 2024).

Social decline has increased prices of the basic food basket, high cost of fuel and of agricultural and livestock supplies, among others. In September 2022 the cost of the basic food basket was \$454.60 and one year on, October 2023, it stood at \$518.05, proving the difficulty that rural families face to access food on a daily basis. As a result of these factors, in both municipalities covered by the project, strategic alliances were made with the Municipal Women's Directorate, civil society (Colectivo Poder y Desarrollo Local, CPDL, {*Local Power and Development Collective*}), and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food, MAGA, which has organized learning centers for rural development, known by the acronym CADER, which are led mostly by women entrepreneurs who

¹ COAPED: Consejo de Coordinación Agropecuario Departamental {*Departmental Agricultural and Livestock Coordination Council*}.

work in different productive activities, according to their skills, knowledge, and conditions, to include them in dynamics that address personal, social and economic aspects for their autonomy, through the development of methodologies that promote strengthening of capacities and skills.

IV. Project Scope

3.1. Project Objectives

a) Objective

General: Strengthen the personal and economic empowerment capacities of rural indigenous women to ensure the operation of their businesses and the sale of their products (including digital/online marketing).

b) Achieving the objective:

- Training and organization of 11 enterprises, eight of which were part of the project during Phase I, with participation of women and men. Activities strengthened: oyster mushroom production, wicker basket crafting, raising broilers and laying hens, traditional weaving, nurseries (with horticultural and forestry plants) and honey production. Please refer to the link {Annex 1 -Technical Data sheets for the groups}: [Anexo 1 - Ficha técnica de grupos](#)
- Implementation of activities to strengthen participants' capabilities in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food, MAGA, facilitating a total of 36 training sessions including personal, economic, financial and leadership empowerment topics. Please refer to the following link {Annex 2 – Participants list}: [LISTADO DE PARTICIPANTES Mrs. Pierels 231.xlsx](#)

c) Participants reached:

Chart No. 1. Direct participants

Scope	Direct Participants		Total
	Women	Men	
11 Enterprise Groups	134	27	161

Chart No. 2. Family members per direct participants

Scope	Direct Participants		Total
	Women	Men	
Participant family members	536	108	644
MAGA participants	2	4	6
TOTAL	538	110	650

d) Scope of intervention per results:

Result 1: Promote the economic and social empowerment of women and youth through the development of productive units (value chains) and strengthening organizational capacities.

Activity 1.1: *Facilitate workshops on financial management, using the women's economic empowerment model (i.e., for budget management) and the Advocacy School app (i.e., to help women learn and understand how to report cases of violence).*

- **Personal empowerment:**

CARE Guatemala in coordination with the Civil Association Colectivo Poder y Desarrollo Local, CDPL, {*Local Power and Development Collective*} carried out 5 workshops for personal strengthening, addressing human rights, power and self-esteem, decision-making and negotiation, emotional intelligence and assertive communication, time use and management, leadership and organization issues, impacting 47 women -enterprise members- from San Andrés Semetabaj and San Lucas Tolimán, department of Sololá. This led to impact awareness, confidence, self-esteem and a society of women who participate, mainly promoting an increase in their personal development and self-esteem, as part of their agency

- **Economic Empowerment / Financial Education:**

Imparted 5 workshops based on CARE Guatemala's economic empowerment models. Topics addressed were: i. Family and entrepreneur finances; ii. Skill Development and Capability Building; iii. Strengthening economic activities and opening spaces to achieve influence at different levels; iv. Generating profitable products and services, inserting them into inclusive value chains; v. Promoting an income increase and economic and social empowerment. All were carried out using theoretical/practical work sessions, with participation of 49 women and 6 men.



Economic empowerment and financial education sessions.

- **Empowerment and Financial Models and the CARE Advocacy School App**

Regarding capacity building with the CARE Advocacy School app, 10 workshops were held with 193 participants. As a result, 133 registered in the application (111 women and 22 men). According to the report, 69% of completed the process, strengthening knowledge on how local Development Councils operate, Municipal Strategic Planning and advocacy processes at the national and local levels. Mrs. Elena Roquel, a project participant described this process as access to use of technology among indigenous, entrepreneur, women leaders. Please refer to the following link [Annex 3 –Advocacy School]: [Anexo 3 - App Escuela de Incidencia](#)



Using CARE's Advocacy School App.

As part of the activities, CARE methodologies and work models were transferred to institutional actors such as staff working at the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food, MAGA, at the Municipal and Departmental levels. A total of 234 women and 82 men participated. Please refer to the following link {Annex 3 – Miscellaneous Sessions}: [Anexo 4 - Sesiones varias](#)

Chart No. 3. Summary of Organizational Capacity Building Topics

Topic	Businesses / Groups	No. Workshops	Women	Men	Total participants
Personal Empowerment	5	5	47	0	47
Economic Empowerment / Financial Education	5	6	54	10	64
Empowerment and Financial Models & CARE Advocacy School App	3 MAGA	3	44	56	100
	8	8	89	16	105
TOTAL		22	234	82	316

Note: Information is for the duration of the project.

Result 2: Increase access of 160 women/young entrepreneurs to productive resources, good sustainable practices and tools for savings activities and income generation.

Activity 2.1 Provide technical assistance sessions and/or visits using CARE's Farmer Field and Business School (FFBS) approach (e.g., field days, sharing experiences to inspire and transfer learning, compost preparation demonstration, etc.) in coordination with MAGA officials.

To inspire and strengthen participants' learning and/or knowledge, 7 exchanges of experiences were coordinated with established productive groups, whose members shared their business management experiences, based on productive activities such as laying and roasting hens, oyster mushroom production, beekeeping and product diversification. These also included operating mechanisms used such as administrative records, roles and functions of members of their board of directors.



Exchange of experiences related to oyster mushroom production, Totonicapán.

These exchanges between multidisciplinary groups were carried out at the municipal and departmental levels and in CARE Guatemala's areas of intervention, allowing project participants to be aware of new ideas, different production techniques, improvement in their presentations and product diversification, resulting in new expectations for production, increasing their income and using all resources available in each group. Please view the following link {Annex 5 – Exchange of experiences}: [Anexo 5 - Intercambio de experiencias](#)

Chart No. 4. Exchange of Experiences Implemented - Summary

Exchanges in:	Participating Organizations	Participating Groups	F	M	Total participants
Oyster mushroom production and product diversification	CARE	Las margaritas	17	2	19
Productive management of broiler chickens	CARE	Granja Avícola CARMAVIC	30	6	17
		Granja Altos de Tolimán.			
Productive management of laying hens	MAGA	Sanik'ya	6	3	9
		Juventud Semetabaj			

Production, and management of a apiaries and by-products	ARAPIS	Aj tikonel Kab	21	2	23
Diversification of by-product products	TIKONEL	Las margaritas	11	0	11
	CARE	Manos artísticas			
	MAGA	Tejidos Santiaguito			
TOTAL			85	13	98

Activity 2.2 *Creation of six savings groups, each with at least 10 women from the entrepreneur groups, applying CARE's Village Savings and Loan Association, VSLA, approach. This includes operating savings groups training and the provision of starting tools and materials.*

Six savings and credit groups were consolidated, which are currently in their first cycle. As part of their strengthening, they established internal regulations, an administrative board and incorporated mechanisms to record income and expenditures of their savings bank. Implementing these procedures has generated trust and proof of this trust is that a loan process has started. Established groups are i. CARNAVIC Poultry Farm; ii. Asociación AjTikonel Kab´; iii. Manos Artísticas Luqueñas {crafts}; iv. Tejedoras de Santiaguito; {traditional weaving} v. Pilonera {nursery} Las Canoas; and vi. Pilonera la Esperanza, with participation of 75 women and 16 men.

Part of the strengthening process included 6 sessions on how to apply the VSLA methodology, where the operation and the savings and loan modalities were presented, as well as savings management, soft savings plans and flexible and safe loans.

Average savings results per group amount to Q11,083.17, equivalent to \$1,458.31, of which, on average, each participant saved Q1,610.00 individually, an amount that equals \$211.00, during a six-month cycle. In addition, Pilonera la Esperanza group began granting loans to 20 participants, setting up an amount of Q32,000.00, equivalent to \$4,236.84 at an interest rate of 5%. {Please refer to *Annex VSLA Methodology*} [Metodología VSLA](#)



Community savings and loans association management, VSLA

Chart No. 5. Results disaggregated by savings and credit group in local currency - Quetzales

VSLA Results				
Groups	Savings	Loans	Social Fund	Fines
Pilonera la Esperanza	Q 46,749.00	Q 32,200.00	Q 1,000.00	Q 306.00
Pilonera las Canoas	Q 6,310.00		Q 264.00	Q 110.00
AJ TIKONEL KAB´	Q 4,250.00		Q 160.00	Q -
CARMAVIC Poultry Farm	Q 4,720.00		Q 276.00	Q 10.00
Manos Artísticas Luqueñas	Q 1,170.00		Q 98.00	Q -
Tejedoras de Santiaguito	Q 3,300.00		Q 350.00	Q -
Total	Q 66,499.00	Q 32,200.00	Q 2,148.00	Q 426.00

Activity 2.3 Provide supplies and productive tools to strengthen 10 business groups (eight from Phase I and two new ones). Trading enterprises include oyster mushroom production, honey products, crafts, vegetable seeds, laying and broiler hens, and tilapia production.

To strengthen economic activities led by women, initial visits were made to participating groups, to prepare an operating diagnosis and identify their needs.

Technical analysis was incorporated where projections were generated to maximize productive capacity. Based on this, supplies and tools were provided to improve and increase production.



Supplies delivered to build the Quixayá pond.

Supplies provided to strengthen economic activities were Poultry producers received production (roasters and local species) and health supplies (food, vaccines and vitamins) to minimize infectious diseases and increase the group's commercial activity. Wicker basket crafters obtained raw materials and basic equipment (sewing machines and shelves) as well as technical assistance to diversify their products with new designs and marketing display mechanisms. Raw materials (thread, waist loom supplies, rope, and string) and technical assistance to diversify and design traditional blouses or güipiles, traditional belts and diverse products were assigned to traditional textile weavers.

Honey producers were supplied with basic equipment [beekeeping boxes, and beeswax sheets] allowing an expansion of hives and therefore increasing production. Oyster mushroom producers received productive supplies and equipment (shelves, seeds, planting tables, and packaging material) as well as technical assistance to incorporate best agricultural and manufacturing practices which increased their output. In the case of the nurseries, businesswomen were provided supplies (seeds, substrate) which increased their sales since they offered a diversity of species to the local market. Finally, Tilapia producers received fingerlings, food, and pond construction material, thus increasing their output. Attached is the endowment matrix per economic activity: {Annex 6 – Delivery of supplies to businesses and production report.} : [Anexo 6 - Entrega de insumos a emprendimientos](#) and [Consolidado de reporte productivo por grupos.docx](#)

Activity 2.4 Impart two sessions to prepare and strengthen group business plans with participation of group/Board leaders (approximately three persons per group).

A total of 3 sessions to develop business plans were held, mainly with the new groups (Quixayá, Pilonera las Canoas and Tejidos Santiaguito). Also, 2 sessions were carried out to strengthen business plans of Phase I groups using the CANVAS methodology approach, facilitating the creation of new business models through an analysis that will be key to continue with their economic activities and that they can identify as “Success Factors for Marketing”. These include partners, activities, key resources, relationships, and their customer segment. As a result of this phase, 8 business plans were updated providing the required guidelines to maximize their productive, commercial and innovation activities. Attached you will find a link to the final documents. Please refer to Annex {Business Plans}: [Planes de negocio](#)

Activity 2.5 Implement workshops focused on helping groups diversify/transform their productive activities in coordination with MAGA.

To strengthen production and considering the need to diversify productive activities, work sessions and knowledge/skills transfer meetings were held with 32 participants, two with the group of women entrepreneurs "Manos Artísticas Luqueñas" and additional ones with "Tejedoras de Santiaguito" with to promote innovation in basket weaving, using new styles, color combinations and accessories and achieve a good presentation. Please refer to [Anexo 7 - Sesiones de diversificación de productos](#)



Participating women during activity diversification of productivity work sessions.

Chart No. 6. Topics addressed to promote business diversification and income generation

Theme	Business / Groups	Workshops	F	M	Total participants
Business & Production Plans	5	7	65	19	84
Diversification of productive activities	2	2	32	0	32
VSLA Methodology	5	5	53	6	59
TOTAL		14	150	25	175

Result 3: Income increase of women entrepreneurs in inclusive markets (supply and demand) through the improvement of capacities to establish marketing relationships for their products.

Activity 3.1 Create product catalogs (group history, added value to products, product image, and prices).

As part of skill strengthening to insert products in new and better markets, a process to strengthen digital marketing was developed. As a result, digital product catalogs were made, incorporating branding actions that include a narrative of each group's history and improving its image (packaging and marketing). During this process, 17 women and 1 man associated with 9 ventures participated.

During the sessions, virtual training modules were prepared for online marketing using Facebook and WhatsApp, as well as in person sessions, to understand the best way to make their products visible (taking photographs and storytelling]. These digital tools improved product marketing for all businesses.

The history of each group was prepared approaching business owners, asking them to express their feelings and narrated how they started. Images of the products were made during a photo session, making them aware of different management and editing techniques. Also new designs were created to be publicized in social media networks, promoting greater visibility of their work and exclusive promotions of their products.



Nursery product catalogue.

Activity 3.2 Pursue digital marketing/product promotion via CARE's, CDPL's and other social media

To guarantee inclusion in markets and commercialization, digital marketing sessions were facilitated, managing to design 9 Facebook and WhatsApp Business pages that will allow selling their products via e-commerce. Digital marketing modules were built containing training processes and methodologies to design a digital identity and to analyze strategies for different e-commerce platforms. The final part of this process has a guide with instructions to continue with online sales

A total of 9 groups of women were trained, accompanied and advised to establish a graphic design for their brand, receiving banners, leaflets, labels and business cards used to continue promoting and expanding their sales.



Group banner used in digital marketing

In person modules (photography and storytelling) were implemented in San Andrés Semetabaj (2 businesses) and San Lucas Tolimán (7 ventures), department of Sololá. Please refer to Annex 12. *{Digital Marketing}*. [Anexo 12 - Marketing Digital](#)

Activity 3.3 Organize two local entrepreneur fairs where groups can promote/sell their products, one at the departmental/state level and one at the municipal level

In coordination with MAGA, the Ministry of Economy, MINECO, and local governments, municipal fairs were held in which micro-entrepreneurs strengthened by the project exhibited their products at the municipal and departmental levels. During the first semester, 3 fairs were scheduled and for the last semester, 1 Entrepreneur Expo- Fair. These marketing and exhibition spaces were aligned to emblematic dates such as International Women's Day, and International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, which contributed directly to position the defense of women's rights, demanding compliance with regulatory frameworks and the multisectoral articulation of project participants.

In coordination with the Economic Development for Women Bill proposal, LEYDEM platform, which unites more than 80 women's organizations at the national level, the Expo-Fair was held in Guatemala City's central park, with participation of 6 project businesses, to commemorate International Women's Day. A second fair was held in Quetzaltenango's central park. Likewise, in coordination with the Municipal Directorate for Women, DMM, Ministry of Economy MINECO, a third fair was organized in the central park of San Lucas Tolimán with participation of 5 enterprises.



Participants at the agricultural Expo-Fair held At Universidad del Valle, Sololá.

CARE, Universidad del Valle, UVG, *{Del Valle University}* and the Ministry of Economy, carried out the departmental business Expo-Fair with participation of 4 businesses supported by the project. A registry of sales at each event is presented in Chart No. 7. Please refer to Annex 8 *{Implementing Expo-Fairs}* [Anexo 8 - Ejecución expo ferias](#)

Chart No. 7. Summary of sales registration at trade fairs

Participating Ventures	Guatemala City. Coordination with LEYDEM	Quetzaltenango International Women's Day	San Lucas Tolimán. Coordination with DMM and MINECO	Sololá, Coordination with UVG and MINECO	TOTAL SALES PER GROUP \$
	8/03/2023	18 y 19/03/23	2/04/2023	3/08/2023	
Manos Artísticas Luqueñas (Wicker Baskets)	\$39.47	\$59.21	\$11.84	\$35.00	\$145.53
Las Margaritas (Oyster Mushrooms)	\$32.24	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$32.24
Asociación Aj Tikonel Kab´ (Honey)	\$98.68	N/A	\$83.55	\$110.50	\$292.74
Granja Avícola CARMAVIC (Live and butchered poultry)	\$21.05	\$118.42	\$10.53	N/A	\$150.00
Emprendedoras de Sanik Yá (White Eggs)	\$70.00	\$50.00	\$23.03	\$45.76	\$188.79
Granja Altos de Tolimán (Live and butchered poultry)	\$21.05	\$63.16	\$25.26	N/A	\$109.47
Pilonera La Esperanza (Vegetable nurseries)	N/A	\$32.89	N/A	\$25.33	\$58.22
TOTAL SALES	\$282.50	\$323.68	\$154.21	\$216.59	\$976.98

As a result of their participation in marketing spaces, a network of marketing channel contacts has been established. This has impacted innovation processes in preparing their products, which, consequently, causes incorporating different processing measures to their final products, and therefore a greater diversification.

Various fair participants mentioned the importance of participating and getting involved in these activities, because they promote the benefit of making their businesses known at the local, municipal and departmental levels, via the exhibition and commercialization of their products.

V. Communications and Visibility

5.1 Visibility materials

As part of following-up the visualization framework actions, visibility materials were prepared. These were printed with direct funds from project activities, to position participants and their businesses. For this reason, the following work was done:

- A total of 220 aprons were manufactured and distributed among members of 11 enterprises, with the phrase: EXERCISING OUR ECONOMIC RIGHTS. This was product of a direct consultation with participants. This material is very useful while preparing their products, as well as for personal use, promoting at the same time, visibility for project development
- Through a digital marketing consultancy, product visibility and promotion materials were designed and provided, (including banners, leaflets, catalogs, and business cards) as well as the historic background of their products and ventures. These materials were delivered digitally and printed for each business to facilitate promotion.
- Creating Facebook and WhatsApp Business pages have strengthened product promotion through different social media, facilitating purchasing and selling their products.



Product catalogue.

As part of the project's communication and visibility process, information of activities implemented has been disseminated via CARE Guatemala's social media. Each action was carried out in conjunction with different women enterprises, institutions, and key actors, to promote women's rights. {Please refer to Annex 11 – Social Media Report } [Anexo 11 - Reporte redes sociales](#)

VI. Successes and challenges

Compliance with Success Indicators

- **Increase by 15% the income of rural indigenous women and groups of young people and entrepreneurs through collective production and marketing processes:** During phase I of the project, most enterprises had incorporated their group's productive activities during a four-month or lesser time-period, therefore their first production cycle had not been completed. As a result, according to the surveys conducted at the beginning and end of the project, 4 groups increased their net income from \$15.00 to \$50.00 per member. During phase II, two to 12 production cycles were achieved by most businesses. A total of 66% of participants have reported an average increase in their net income of \$25.00 to \$70.00 per member.
- **# and % of women and youth strengthen branding and promotion of their products through digital marketing and at local fairs:** Economic activities led by participants have a corporate identity (branding) and social media [Facebook, WhatsApp] for marketing, strengthening their capacities to improve their visual identity and promote their products. For this process, 18 partners were trained to replicate their knowledge to 82% of women and young people associated with the project. Their effective participation in economic activities during all 5 agricultural fairs was a focal point for their businesses because each group promoted their products at the municipal and departmental level.
- **# of business plans implemented by groups of entrepreneurs:** Three business plans were prepared for the groups added during the current phase of the project. Additionally, 8 group business plans were strengthened and updated as a follow-up to phase I, highlighting the importance of bases of the organizational groups, promoting action planning for enterprises to achieve their commercial goal.
- **# of governmental personnel trained by CARE's Advocacy School App:** The Advocacy School App was shared and presented to governmental agencies since CARE Guatemala works with them, reaching 61 institutional participants who completed the course.

Successes:

- Incorporating business plans in all participating groups strengthened their business models and provided tools for effective production management and marketing activities.
- Pilonera la Esperanza works with savings and loans. With previous experiences its members obtained favorable results complying with deadlines and loan payments.
- A 91% return on their initial and investment capital from the group members proves that applying administrative and financial tools transferred during training processes, proving good management of their funds as well as commercialization of their products, including the results of incorporating traditional and digital market strategies.
- 94% of participating women have increased their ability to participate equally in productive activities compared to men, generating an increase in their economic income. At the group level, there is 92% of gender

equality.

- 100% of businesses have a committee and/or board of directors, regulations, and keep at least 3 accounting records, strengthening a better control and management of responsibilities, proving to be a strategy to sustain economic activity.

Challenges faced:

- Increase current production to generate income on a permanent basis is the main challenge of the project. To achieve it, the project's technical team worked to install productive, transformative, and marketing capacities that must be replicated with accompaniment of fundamental partners such as CPDL and MAGA, to ensure a continuous improvement of productive activities.
- To continue replicating and maximizing project results, CARE worked a detailed methodological transfer. Despite this, there is evidence of a high turnover of personnel in public institutions, therefore it is important that participants continue their political lobbying to ensure that MAGA teams remain in the territory.
- That participants continue replicating training actions related to women's human rights to effectively mainstream the gender approach in productive and reproductive activities, promoting participation of family members to reduce their workload.
- Through political advocacy actions, trained participants can lobby local governments to institutionalize expo-fairs, have a local mechanism to market their products and ensure innovation in their transformation processes.

VII. Lessons learned

- Inter-institutional coordination and partnerships with other local organizations allowed the development of this project in an enjoyable manner and with better execution stages, leading to the promotion of a sustainable development of the project.
- Establishing regulations determining roles, functions and responsibilities within the collective enterprises allowed for an effective administration which will promote their durability in the processes. For example, norms such as: monthly accountability exercises avoided discussions among participants, which in turn allowed assessments of different productive and commercial factors, customer demands and administrative records. In the long run, these procedures contributed to settle personal profits which in turn, motivated those responsible for economic activities.
- Technical assistance and accompaniment provided by entities such as MAGA and CARE Guatemala, allowed the empowerment of economic activities by each group, which is important for the sustainability of economic initiatives.
- Knowledge strengthening on issues related to personal and economic empowerment of participants in a coordinated manner with other entities involved, reinforced the collective approach, which allows the continuity and sustainability of businesses supported by the project's framework which directly contribute to improving conditions of participants and ultimately enables the economic leadership of indigenous women.
- Providing supplies to improve production of each group was a high-impact action that increased their productive capacity and generated a greater income which, added to the application of quality control in production, allowed having significant commercial and competitiveness impact in the market.

- Strengthening knowledge on issues of personal and economic empowerment of participants in a coordinated manner with entities involved, reinforced the collective approach, which allows the continuity and sustainability of businesses supported within the framework of the project; that directly contributes to improving conditions and ultimately enables the economic leadership of indigenous women.
- The provision of supplies to improve the production of each group was a high-impact action, increasing productive capacity and generated a greater income. This, added to the application of quality controls in production made a significant commercial and competitiveness impact in the market.

VIII. Sustainability Actions

- Sharing and presenting different methodologies (Farmers Field and Business School, FFBS), personal and economic empowerment, and the Village Savings and Loans Association methodology, VSLA, among others which CARE Guatemala works together with its allies, ensure follow-up and sustainability through their appropriation, shared at the municipal and community level.
- Providing supplies to strengthen enterprises has led each group to project productive growth for the short and medium terms, thus increasing their income and incorporation into different local, municipal and departmental markets.
- The relationship with MAGA is part of the sustainability factor, since it is a governing, empowered body which will favor implementing and monitoring the development of different economic activities strengthened during the execution of the project.
- The economic strengthening generated by the project to ensure that participating women, mainly, have the same personal, social, and economic opportunities in the department of Sololá, would have the utmost importance if they could be replicated in other Guatemalan territories where there are similar, substantial inequality gaps.

IX. Conclusions

- The project “strengthening the economic leadership of rural women” has achieved successful results which are reflected in the operational development of the enterprises throughout these 12 months of implementation; Much of this reach is due to the processes of strengthening capacities and skills [22 workshops carried out on topics of personal empowerment (94% increased their equitable participation in productive activities and 81% in decision making within the home), social and economic (generating income for 66% of the participants and 80% strengthening their business management skills)], strengthening and improving personal, family and organizational living conditions.
- The technical assistance sessions through CARE's Field and Business School (FFBS) approach involved 5 days in the field and exchanges of experiences, being essential for obtaining new knowledge and productive management techniques for the different ventures. The productive activities carried out within the 11 enterprises were gradually strengthened with inputs which allowed them to increase their production and marketing of their products through different expo fairs carried out, with the participation of 60% of the enterprises, making themselves known at the local level. , municipal and

departmental; Social networks as part of digital marketing have led to being able to reach new clients throughout the country of Guatemala.

- The implementation of CARE's Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) methodology influenced the incorporation of 6 groups initiated with the group savings phase, included training for 89 participants on the operation of savings groups and supplies initials, which made it possible to guarantee the financial security of the participants and, in some cases, have mechanisms to expand their productive capacity with savings/credits for direct investments in income-generating activities.
- The project promoted the economic participation of women, influencing a 94% increase in their capacities for equal participation in productive activities, 81% in decision-making at home and a 66% increase in their income generation, It reached 92% in aspects of gender equality, allowing women and men to be given the same opportunities and conditions, there was a 66% increase in their income after having participated in the different activities of the project.

X. History of interest

Dionisia Tohom Locón de Tián, 40 years old, was born in Canoas Bajas, a village in the town of San Andrés Semetabaj has been a pylon producer for the last 2 years. Dionisia is an active member of Pilonera las Canoas, which produces and markets pylons. of vegetables.

For women like Dionisia, subsistence is not an easy task, and they must work much harder to achieve incorporation into the different production and marketing activities. Thanks to their collective efforts, women have achieved economic stability as a group, families and community.

“Since the group was formed, I have received several trainings on personal and economic empowerment, as well as production, which has changed my productive mentality and the way I generate income”

He also assures that with the knowledge that the project gave him, his income from the sale of his products increased. “For example: before we only produced piles of onion, currently we have grown and are producing piles of lettuce, cabbage, tomato, chili pepper and broccoli,” says Doña Dionisia.



With this initiative, Mrs. Dionisia concludes: “I am part of a group and I feel quite excited because what we are looking for together is to produce a greater number of pylons and with a greater variety of seeds to sell and generate more income.”

Through his initiative, he has inspired different people in the community to get involved in activities within the entrepreneurship. For example, after seeing their involvement and success, his son decided to be part of the group, which has allowed him to learn much more about the correct management of pylon production and, through this, generate income. Dionisia mentions “Seeing my son interested in the work we do as a group fills me with joy because he will also be a motivation so that more young people can get involved in the activities and develop within the community.”

XI. Summary of Budget execution

Item	Budget	Expenses (through Dic 2023)
Personnel	\$31,486	\$30,980
Consulting (translation/professional services)	\$363	\$390
Materials, Services and Consumables	\$18,080	\$18,289
Travel and Transport	\$3,058	\$1,695
Occupancy	\$4,012	\$3,938
Subgrants (CPDL Collective)	\$30,000	\$31,708
CARE Administration Cost (13% of total)	\$13,000	\$0.00
Total	\$100,000	\$87,000
Balance		

XII. List of annexes

No.	Documento	Enlace
1	Group technical sheet	Anexo 1 - Ficha técnica de grupos
2	Population Reached	Anexo 2 - Población Alcanzada
3	Advocacy School App	Anexo 3 - App Escuela de Incidencia
4	Various sessions	Anexo 4 - Sesiones varias
5	Exchange of experiences	Anexo 5 - Intercambio de experiencias
6	Delivery of inputs to ventures	Anexo 6 - Entrega de insumos a emprendimientos
7	Product diversification sessions	Anexo 7 - Sesiones de diversificación de productos
8	Expo fair execution	Anexo 8 - Ejecución expo ferias
9	COAPEM participating institutions	Anexo 9 - Instituciones participantes COAPEM
10	POA 2023	Anexo 10 - POA 2023
11	Social media report	Anexo 11 - Reporte redes sociales
12	Consulting Report	Anexo 12 - Marketing Digital