

SPANNING THE DIVIDE DIGITAL FARMING SCHOOL FOR WOMEN PRESENTED BY CARE MALAWI



PROBLEM STATEMENT

Women small-scale farmers play a vital role in global food production, yet their contributions are widely ignored. According to the UN, only 5% of all agricultural extension resources are directed at women. Most extension workers only reach out to men decision-makers in the homes, and because of time constraints and cultural reservations, women are often excluded from participating in extension activities. Furthermore, women in Malawi tend to have lower levels of education than men, which limits their active participation in training that uses a lot of written material.

OUR SOLUTION

CARE Malawi's Farmer Field and Business Schools (FFBS) are a proven and effective way to invest in women farmers. This model integrates not only agriculture, but also gender issues, access to markets, and nutrition, addressing the holistic needs of smallholder families. Unlike traditional teaching methods, the FFBS model puts farmers in charge of building the skills they need to make the best investment decisions for their families.

Because women are often unable to attend extension activities and cannot read written materials, producing a digital video of FFBS lessons would put vital educational materials within reach of women farmers, and help transform the gender inequality that prevents small-scale women farmers and their families from rising up out of poverty.



IMPACT

The FFBS has brought about the adoption of effective agricultural techniques, shown increases in income and provided better access to markets. Since the implementation of FFBS in Malawi, women's average annual income from agriculture increased by 53%, and more harmonious relations in the home were reported by both men and women. Women's access to extension services improved from 29% to 82%, while their access to output markets rose to 63%.

Since 2017, CARE Malawi has produced 8 video modules for each of the key domains of the FFBS to be used in a digital version of the school.

LOOKING FORWARD

CARE Malawi intends to scale up the FFBS program by partnering with the government of Malawi to promote the replication of the FFBS across the nation. CARE Malawi will also work in partnership with the private sector in promotion of increased access to markets, as well as academic and research institutions to further develop the FFBS program.