# APPROACH BRIEF

## Social Analysis and Action for Food and Nutrition Security Programming

**OVERVIEW** The CARE Sexual, Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) team organized multiple participatory methods into a framework called Social Analysis and Action (SAA). SAA has been utilized successfully with many communities to address gender, power and social norms affecting health development, specifically SRHR. Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) focuses on agricultural systems, sustainable economies, and nutrition within both development and humanitarian initiatives. FNS cannot be achieved without gender equity. Addressing gender equity addresses sensitive social norms related to religion, social/economic status, human rights, and sexual and reproductive health, all of which have an impact on FNS and the health and well-being of a community. The Social Analysis and Action toolkit for Food and Nutrition Security provides tools to bring social norms, gender equity and power dynamics into FNS projects or the purpose of increasing impact.

> **"Study after study has shown that there is no effective development strategy in which women do not play a central role. When women are fully involved, families are healthier. They are better fed. Income, savings and reinvestments go up. And what is true of families is also true of communities and, eventually, whole nations."**
>
> **Kofi Annan, Former Secretary General, United Nations**

## What is SAA-FNS?

Social Analysis and Action in the context of Food and Nutrition Security (SAA-FNS) addresses the social, economic, and cultural factors that influence agriculture practices, livelihoods, climate resilience, nutritional health, gender inequality and development. SAA-FNS is a community-based approach that facilitates dialogue, enabling critical thinking and reflection about how social conditions perpetuate food and nutrition insecurity and development challenges. SAA-FNS engages communities, CARE partners, and CARE staff in recurring critical reflection and dialogue to catalyze social change by building awareness of the link between social norms, gender equity and power dynamics and food and nutrition security program impact. SAA-FNS is designed as an integrative approach that enhances existing project activities and catalyzes community action planning, collective actions, and the work of CARE and CARE staff. The goal of SAA-FNS is to facilitate a community-led social change process through which participants act together to create more equitable social and gender norms and address development challenges. The purpose of the SAA-FNS toolkit is to provide tools to bring social norms, gender equity and power dynamics analysis into FNS projects for the purpose of increasing impact.

Women and girls empowerment is foundational to CARE's belief in gender justice and the work to eradicate poverty. The SAA-FNS tools work on all domains (agency, relations, structure) of women's empowerment in CARE's Gender Equality and Women's Voice Framework. For example, to work on improving and strengthening relations for women's empowerment,

dialogues are facilitated that lead to changes in decision making in the household around land, crops, food purchasing and preparation so that women have equal say. Specific tools, activities, and discussion allow individuals, through reflection and dialogue, to explore the underlying social causes of community issues, and identify steps to determine what can be done about these social issues and how. SAA-FNS reveals a complex understanding of social norms and how they impact health, FNS, and the well-being of individuals, households and communities by allowing deep feelings to be shared and heard while acknowledging shared or varying values within a community.

# Overview of the SAA-FNS Process
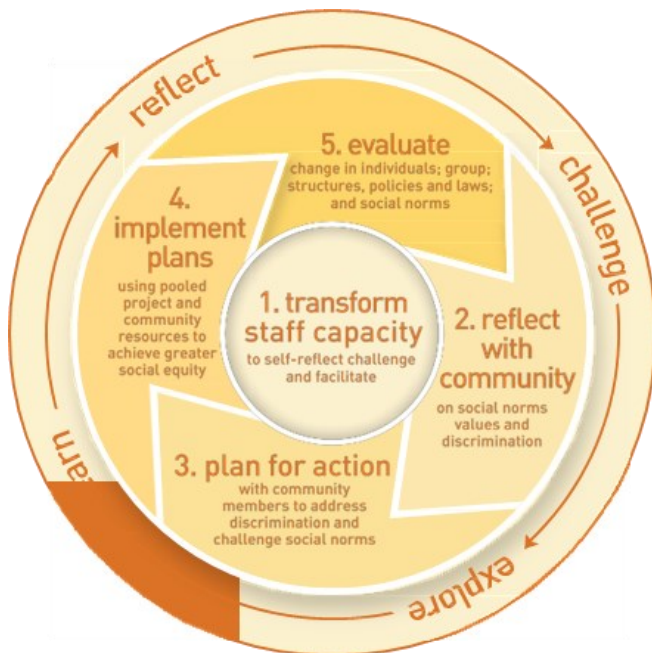


## STAFF TRANSFORMATION

SAA-FNS creates space for CARE staff and CARE partners to explore and reflect upon their own social values and assumptions regarding gender and power. CARE builds staff capacities to understand the process of social norms change while recognizing the role of CARE staff as actors in the community.

## GENDER AND SITUATIONAL ANALSYSIS

The first step for engaging the community in the SAA-FNS process is an exploratory and participatory process conducted with communities to encourage collective reflection and dialogue to surface, explore, and begin to challenge the values and norms that impact community member's food and nutrition security, health and well-being.

## SKILLED FACILITATION USING CRITICAL REFLECTIVE DIALOGUE

The SAA-FNS is a process of critical reflective dialogue (CRD) that deepens participants' understanding of how social norms, gender equity and power dynamics may inhibit people from practicing positive behaviors. This process is not messaging, teaching, nor providing technical solutions; rather the facilitation aims to surface individual and community attitudes and norms, explore how these attitudes, norms, and power dynamics shape individual and collective behavior, and reflect on the consequences of those norms and behaviors.

## CONTINUOUS PROCESS OF REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

SAA-FNS and its entire process of implementation in communities depends on continuous contact that facilitates sustainable change. CARE understands social and behavior change as a strategic process rather than singular or unconnected activities. Therefore, one-off or ad hoc events are not sufficient: SAA should include regular reflection and dialogue in communities that focuses on addressing social and gender norms, attitudes and behaviors.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A well-documented SAA-FNS program covers three key elements:

1) A reflective SAA-FNS process in which gender and power are explicitly discussed to gauge the progress towards social and behavior change;
2) Individual beliefs and practices and larger changes occurring in social norms are qualitatively assessed; and
3) Objectively verifiable measures of material status (health, livelihood, education, etc.) for women and their communities through both qualitative and quantitative evaluation.

## THEORY OF CHANGE
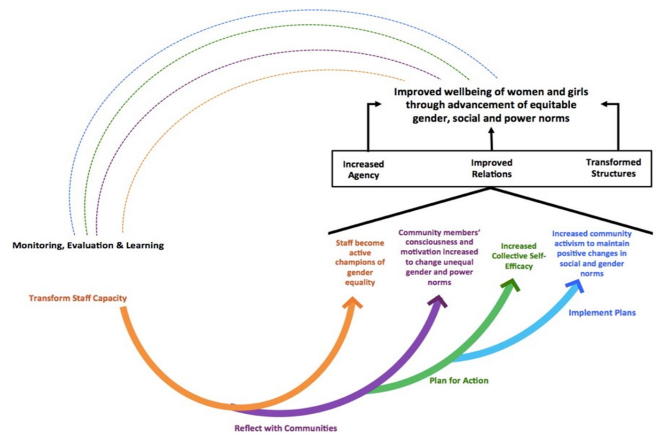
**Reflect**, **Act**, **Implement** and **Evaluate** is an organic and constantly evolving change process. SAA-FNS is framed by an ever-present inquiry to challenge, explore, learn, and reflect on the social and individual changes initiated by the approach. This participatory learning process, which includes situational analysis, relies on local knowledge and input to identify critical social barriers and map the pathways of power that perpetuate negative social and gender norms. Some of the principle ways that SAA promotes gender equity in food and nutrition security are:

- Engaging men & boys in nutrition education & training
- Facilitating joint household decision-making around food and nutrition issues with men and women
- Promoting shared household chores between men & women
- Encouraging equal access to resources
- Supporting women's mobilization

## Desired Outcomes of SAA-FNS may include:

- CARE staff, collaborating partners and communities, with greater awareness of gender and power norms and greater facility in discussing them.
- More equitable social and gender norms at the individual, household and community levels resulting in sector-specific and cross-cutting behavior change at the household, community and institutional (e.g. health providers) level.
- More effective existing programs resulting in concrete improvements in the lives of women and their communities (for example, improved nutritional status if extension agents are better able to counsel around sensitive topics such as intra-household food equity).

### Why is Women's Empowerment Important for Food and Nutrition Security?

In nearly 2,000 of the most vulnerable communities in Bangladesh, CARE' Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO), phases one and two, has shown extraordinary successes in reducing malnutrition while improving women's economic empowerment – demonstrating that increasing gender equality and empowering women are critical for achieving FNS outcomes. Indirect nutrition interventions, such as Empowerment, Knowledge, and Transformative Action (EKATA) groups increase women's economic potential and power in household decisions-making by linking women to women's groups in their own communities and on regional and national levels; training women in leadership and decision-making skills; and prioritizing men's engagement to ensure post project sustainability. Through the EKATA model, the program saw that women are approximately three times more involved in income generating activities than they were at the start of SHOUHARDO II, and as a result families' income grew by 85%, more than the 60% national average growth in the same timeframe. Women in SHOUHARDO II were dramatically more likely to access ante-natal care (about 2.5 times more likely, well above the national average), and children were more likely to receive oral rehydration treatment for diarrhea. Dietary diversity nearly doubled for families in the SHOUHARDO program, and families saw the number of months out of the year that they spent without enough food drop from 6.1 to 1—an 83% improvement.
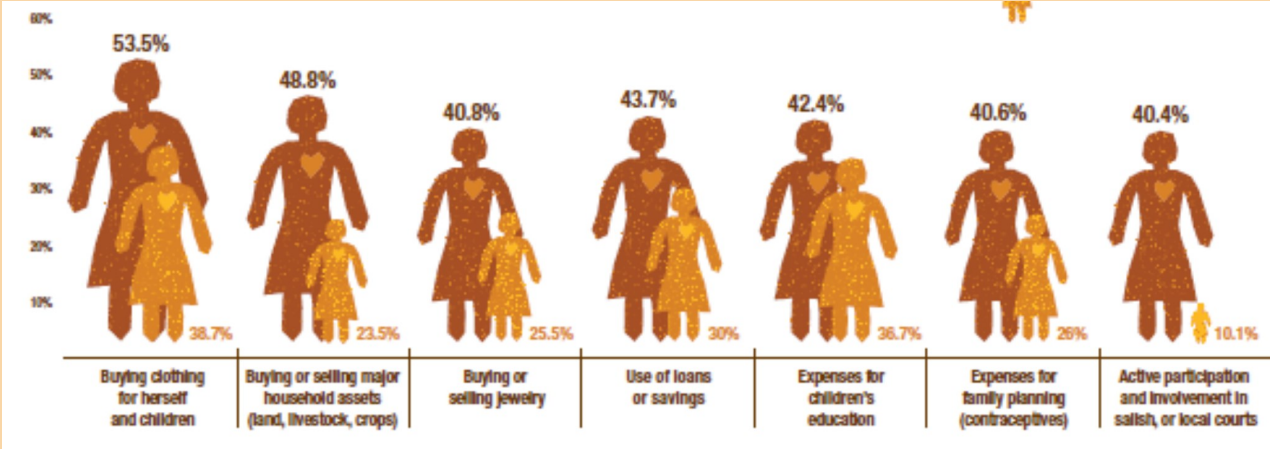
## Stories from the Field

### SHARING HOUSEHOLD CHORES IN BENIN

After attending SAA-FNS session is Bonou, Benin, Sylvie and her husband, Dansou, began sharing household roles and responsibilities. Upon reflection, Sylvie noted, "Since that time my husband more often discusses about our household and this really strengthened cohesion and harmony in our household. Since then we have less problems. "



*Pictured Above*: Dansou now shares roles and responsibilities to support the household, including sweeping; *Pictured Below*: Men's Reflective Dialogue Session in Zambia.



### EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD IN ZAMBIA

Muzondi Kumwenda, a village headman of Mulaka, Egichikeni, Zambia has seen changes in the way men and women relate in his village. Growing up he believed certain community responsibilities and food were to be preserved for men only. As an active participant of the SAA-FNS,

Headman Mulaka, now a changed man, says, "I came to realize we were subjecting our own children to malnutrition because of certain practices that denied pregnant women and children, access to the much needed nutritious food in the household. We continued depending on practices that were based on greediness".

## Looking Forward

All FNS programs will facilitate gender equity utilizing CARE's SAA-FNS by continuing to facilitate critical reflections about how social conditions among women and men, girls and boys leading to women and girls achieving the full range of their rights and therefore, health and well-being. CARE will use SAA-FNS as a tool to work with communities to create safe open spaces.

## "The fate of nations is tied to the status of women." FAO, 2017

SAA-FNS improves gender equity through critical thinking, reflection, and dialogue about gender, power, and social norms to encourage problem solving and change within individuals, households, communities. In particular social norms change processes will focus on norms related to household decision-making, access to resources, mobility, household food distribution, taboos, timing of marriage, and timing of pregnancy and acceptability of contraception. Women and girls will be the impact populations but not the only ones to participate in SAA-FNS dialogues. A major target population for interventions will be involving men and boys around gender socialization and masculinities, caregiving and fatherhood, power and violence and sexual diversity with the goals of having men reflect upon and internalize how gender and power affects their own human development and relationships.