



“We are not responsible for the damages caused by climate change. I want to say to world leaders - you will take measures so that we can survive the losses that are happening.”

— Mamta Begum, Bangladesh

Increases in global conflict, the economic impact of COVID-19, market inflation, and the growing effects of climate change are compounding global crises. Those crises disproportionately affect the most vulnerable communities, especially women and girls. **The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance increased from 274 million in 2022 to 339 million in 2023 (UNOCHA, 2023)** More than 600 million women and girls lived in conflict-affected countries in 2022, a 50% increase since 2017 (UN Women, 2023). Despite the growing needs, the humanitarian funding gap in 2023 stands at \$43 billion, the highest ever (UNOCHA, 2023).

Addressing the unprecedented and overwhelming humanitarian crisis requires response and recovery efforts to listen to and address the needs of those affected the most, especially women and girls.

What are women telling us?

CRISES ARE COMPOUNDING

Women are reporting climate change, food insecurity, and conflict as the top three crises that drive impact on livelihood, food security, and safety.

TOP CRISES WOMEN ARE REPORTING



Food Insecurity



Lack of clean water



Drought



Conflict



Pests destroying crops

What are their top three challenges?

Impact on livelihood and food security continue to be the top two reported impacts:

- **Earning a living has become more challenging:** 78% of women and 67% of men reported an impact on their livelihood; women continue to experience higher levels of livelihood impact.
- **Food is scarce and expensive:** 74% of women and 72% of men reported an impact on food security. Women are more likely to eat less and sell their assets than men. Soaring food prices and inflation on essential commodities are significant factors that also affect access and availability of food.

Safety has overtaken mental health as one of the biggest impact areas.

- **47% of women and 62% of men reported an impact on their safety.** In 2020 and 2021, mental health was the third prioritized impact area; in 2023, however, more women and men prioritized safety.

“We had nothing to eat and no water. And even if we managed to find water, how would we get it? We had no containers or canisters to transport it.”

—Maimounata Sawadogo, mother of two, Burkina Faso. She had to flee her village with her family due to conflict.

“War changes the way of life. For example, when rockets fell in our area, we constantly had to clean and make small repairs, change the windows. Before the war, repairs were not done often, but now we are doing them all the time.”

— Adolescent girl FGD participant, Mykolaiv, Ukraine



CASE STUDY

Flooding and market inflation is the most pressing crisis we are facing now. Because of the flooding in the entire Gatumba district, hundreds of houses are destroyed, including mine. The prices of goods and other necessities on the market have risen while our income is declining. The war next door in the DRC severely restricts trade between us and our Congolese neighbors, which means the cross-border trade I used to do a few years ago is limited now, further limiting my source of income.

— Judith Nijimbere -46 years old, Gatumba District, Burundi.

Women are taking Action

- **Earning income:** even with limited resources and opportunities, 59% of women and 62% men are trying to restore their livelihood. Women use savings, diversify their income-generating activities, and borrow to make ends meet.
- **Leading community response:** 43% of women and 49% of men said they are sharing information in their communities, and 41% of women and 52% of men are helping community groups to adapt in a crisis context.
- **Building networks and solidarity:** Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) are critical safety nets for members. 60% of VSLA members reported using social funds to support members. For women in VSLAs, the group is a social support, and their solidarity help them to lead in their communities.



“We played a key role in supporting hundreds of households. Thanks to our groups, distressed families who had lost everything and fled the conflict, now have access to food. We didn’t wait, we made sure we provided support right away. If we had waited, some of these displaced people would not have survived.”

—Ms. Diawara Djeneba Arama
VSLA Chairperson, Segou Region, Mali.



Women’s Recommendations for Change

Despite their grassroots-level leadership, women participation in formal decision-making spaces is limited and they often are not consulted about their needs.

In 2023, we asked women in seven countries what we should recommend; here’s what they are asking:



Act now to support livelihood recovery: 67% of women and 61% of men said that supporting income and businesses should be a top advocacy priority to enable them to recover their livelihood and build resilience to address ongoing shocks and crises.



Urgent action to address food insecurity: When respondents prioritize an immediate advocacy focus area, 64% of women and 69% of men reported food, nutrition, and agriculture.



Strengthen access to health services, including reproductive health services was prioritized by 37% of women and 36% of men.



Prioritize safety: 30% of women and men urge actors to address safety issues, including GBV.

Supporting women’s top four priorities requires actors to **listen to and engage women; thus, different actors should reinforce spaces, support women’s leadership, and create spaces for women to raise their voices safely.**



Tony Liparota / CARE

Methodology

Since 2020, 38,000 women in 27 countries have shared their stories, needs, and experiences of leadership. This report represents 9,517 respondents (7,208 women) from twelve countries¹ – Burundi, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Cote d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, and Vietnam. The data includes survey findings from twelve quantitative surveys and insights from 22 RGAs, assessments, and case studies from 2023, providing insights into the growing gendered challenges women and men, boys’ and girls are experiencing in different crisis contexts, including conflict, natural disasters, food insecurity, and other crises.

This summary highlights key findings from Her Voice report from March 2024. The full report is available [here](#).

¹ Most of the people in these samples are participants of CARE’s program, which implies that they are among the poorest and most vulnerable people in society. This data does not reflect national level representative surveys.

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