

RESILIENT WOMEN'S GROUP APPROACH

NCBA CLUSA believes that gender equity and equality are fundamental for realizing human rights and are essential to effective and sustainable development outcomes.

Women play a crucial role in food systems and advancing positive nutrition outcomes, comprising half of the agricultural workforce in developing countries. Yet, they need more access to resources and opportunities than men. Specifically, women often have more difficulty accessing education, training, employment opportunities, and other resources (e.g., agriculture extension, access to finance, etc.). To combat these inequities in the food system, NCBA CLUSA developed a **women-centered and community-based approach**, the **Resilient Women's Group approach**, to address women's restrictions in exercising their agency and empowering them to improve food security and nutrition within their households and community.

Resilient Women's Groups are community groups of women of reproductive age and grandmothers that reinforce relations amongst women in the community and create a social network and a space for

Resilient Women's Group Leader provides training on nutrition to group members in Senegal.



The Resilient Women's Group Approach was originally developed in Senegal and has been implemented for over a decade in the country as a crucial part of the USAID Feed the Future Yaajeende and follow on USAID Feed the Future Kawolor projects. These Resilient Women's Groups, locally known as Debbo Galle Groups, played an important role in empowering women to achieve nutrition outcomes. For example, over the course of the 5-year implementation of the Kawolor project, the percentage of women with minimum diet diversity increased from 19.7% to 96.2%.

women to share information, resources, and everyday experiences on the health and nutrition of children, pregnant and breastfeeding women. Ultimately, this approach aims to improve community food security and nutrition by strengthening social ties and promoting group cohesion for women to mobilize and work together to influence change in their respective households and larger communities.

Alongside providing a space for knowledge sharing, these Resilient Women's Groups are organized using the structure of a Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA). VSLAs provide group members with access to savings and credit and the space and resources for members to invest in individual and group activities. Specifically, this Resilient Women's Group approach capitalizes on the fact that women are already meeting together to provide other training related to sustainable agriculture, health, and nutrition tailored to the community's needs to advance the food security of the group and the community.

While Resilient Women's Groups provide women with a space to access critical resources and information to improve their family's food security and well-being, they are not meant to function in isolation. Including the community at every step of the creation and implementation of Resilient Women's Groups ensures that group members have the power to exercise their agency and apply the resources, information, and tools provided through this approach. NCBA CLUSA has a long-standing history and expertise in farmer organization and cooperative governance strengthening to empower individuals to solve their problems locally. The Resilient Women's Group approach closely aligns with NCBA CLUSA's belief that taking a community-based, participatory approach is crucial for empowering communities to organize and manage their development, which is key to achieving increased food security and gender equality.

Resilient Women's Group come together for their weekly VSLA meeting in Senegal.

