



## ABOUT CARE

CARE is an international development and humanitarian organisation that has been working in Timor-Leste since 1994. With programmes that extend across all parts of the country, CARE works with partners to save lives, defeat poverty, and achieve social justice.

CARE works with remote, rural communities and civil society partners to combat gender inequality, as this has been shown to be one of the most effective ways to create sustainable development outcomes.

Ensuring well-being and a voice for women and girls in rural, disadvantaged areas is at the heart of CARE's work. This is achieved in four priority areas of Education, Women's Economic Empowerment, Health, and promoting Women's Voice in society through development and humanitarian programmes.

## ABOUT HAFORSA 3

According to the World Bank<sup>1</sup>, 42% of Timorese population live below the poverty line, with approximately 70% of them living in rural parts of the country. Subsistence farmers account for the majority of these figures, and with the frequent occurrence of natural disasters and climate change, their agricultural production has grown unstable, making rural livelihoods vulnerable. HAFORSA 3 aims to build on the achievements and lessons gained from the HAFORSA 2 project, namely to strengthening rural farmers' livelihoods, enhancing women's economic empowerment, and improving their nutritional status through the promotion of a healthy diet and cooking practices. The transition from subsistence agriculture to market-oriented agriculture will also be a key component of the third phase of the project, where the CARE team works closely with rural farmers to improve the use of innovative and modern agricultural techniques to increase agricultural productivity and linking them to their local market to sell their produce.

### KEY FACTS

**Project duration:** March 2024 - February 2027

**Donor:** The Government of Japan through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)

**Budget:** USD \$355,942 (first year of implementation)

**Government partners:** Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry and

Secretary of State for Equality

**Location:** Atsabe, Ermera municipality

**Project participants:** The project aims to directly engage with approximately 1,005 people; such as target farmers, their spouses, women of reproductive age and Water Facility Management Committees in four aldeias in Atsabe. The project is also expected to have an indirect impact on approximately 2,160 people.

## PROJECT APPROACH

### Strengthening rural livelihoods

The project aims to enhance the livelihoods of vulnerable households through improving infrastructure settings such as agricultural water supply facilities and community roads to facilitate farmer's access to markets. Engaging target farmers in capacity-building activities is key to improving their livelihoods, and our team works with them to increase their horticultural knowledge and techniques, business management skills and expand their market linkage.

### Enhancing women's economic empowerment

Our team aims to achieve this outcome by engaging with female farmers to increase their income through encouraging their active participation in income-generating activities in agriculture. Engaging men to challenge harmful gender norms that hinder women's economic empowerment is key. Our team introduces community awareness-building initiatives on gender equality, with particular focus on engaging farmers and their spouses to share equal responsibilities and voice for household financial management and control.

### Improving healthy nutritional practice for vulnerable households, with focus on pregnant, lactating women and children under the age of 5

In order to achieve this outcome, our team works with target farmers to diversify their horticulture products as well as promote healthy cooking methods that utilise organic and nutritious vegetables.

## HAFORSA PROJECT HISTORY

From 2016 to 2019 CARE implemented the HAFORSA 1 project in Atsabe, with the objective of enhancing the capacity of farmers to diversify and sustain their livelihoods in agriculture and strengthen women's participation in livelihoods activities. Following on from the completion of the first phase of the project, the second phase operated from 2020 until early 2024, to build on the successes of the first phase in improving livelihoods and addressing challenges related to gender inequality. Despite the successful first phase, in some areas women continue to be expected bear the burden of unequal domestic responsibilities with agricultural and livelihoods activities.

Harmful gender norms and traditional perceptions about women's roles in agriculture limited their representation in decision-making roles within the farmer groups structures. To respond to this challenge, in the second phase the CARE team trained female farmers in public speaking, and facilitated their engagement and leadership in community decision making processes. Engaging men and boys to promote gender equality awareness and disrupt negative gender norms enabled women to take on leadership roles within their farmer groups. Prior to the start of the project, some communities in the Atsabe region lacked agricultural water supply systems to support farmers with their agricultural activities throughout the dry season. Farmers in the area were primarily reliant on rain-fed cultivation for their livelihoods. Through community-led action, the project established agricultural water systems and CARE provided capacity-building training to help them manage and maintain the water systems beyond the project life-cycle.

