



GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S VOICE



WHY GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S VOICE?

We live in a more globally connected world, where immense advancements have been achieved. Yet, growth and advancement remains inequitable – benefiting some, while exploiting and excluding others. This is why CARE acknowledges its work must engage issues of social justice alongside development outcomes.

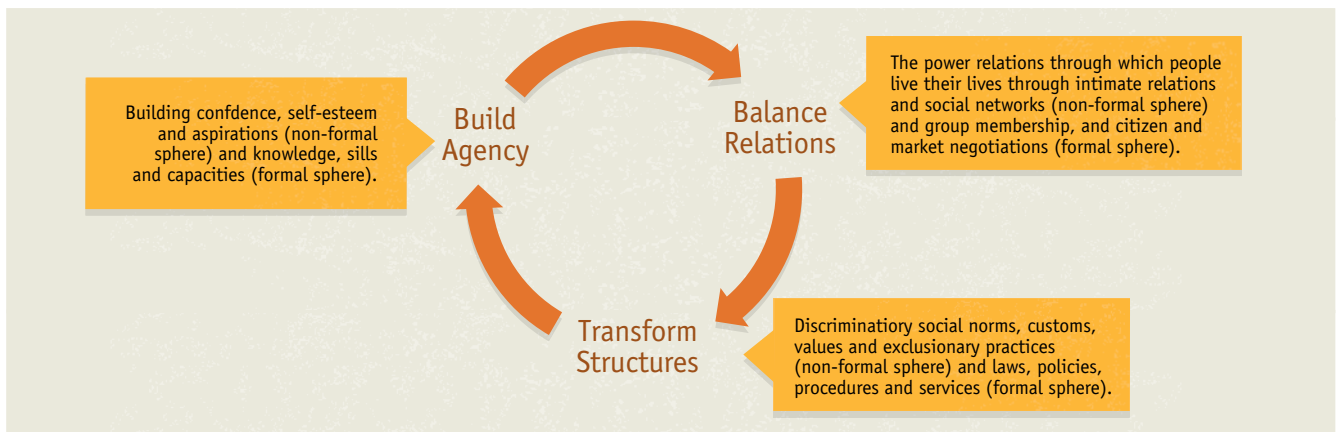
Justice is a core value that ensures CARE remains on the right side of history – and helps to move toward the world it envisions. This commitment requires that we consider how programming, partnerships and international aid interact with systems of global imperialism, state repression, racial and ethnic hierarchy and gender oppression. These systems are pertinent in the lived experiences and material conditions of the poor and marginalized groups with whom CARE works. We specifically address systematic gender discrimination upheld by laws, policies, institutions, and persistent practices made invisible by how normal they have become, how commonplace and accepted they are (everyday discrimination).

CARE'S VISION FOR GENDER JUSTICE

A world where all people live in peace, are free from fear and the threat of violence, enjoy equal rights, freedoms, access to resources and opportunities. In this world, **people across genders, ethnicities, abilities and ages** work together to dismantle systems of oppression and build a world of mutual-aid and accountability, acceptance, compassion and understanding. **Diverse women's leadership** is visible, potent, recognized and supported. **Girls and boys** grow up with a **strong belief in justice and in themselves, with the confidence** to explore who they are and pursue their aspirations. Our **inter-connectedness and diversity** are uplifted and celebrated, and the actions of **every generation** are undertaken with the welfare of **future generations** in mind.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

CARE's **Gender Equality Framework (GEF)** was developed to provide a framework for conceptualizing and planning gender equality work. The GEF updates the previous **Women's Empowerment Framework** to capture learning that our women and girls' empowerment approaches must be synchronised with and complementary to how we engage men and boys¹ and people of all/diverse genders for gender equality. Our theory of change is based on CARE's experience that achieving gender equality and women's voice requires transformative change. CARE's extensive evidence base - particularly from the Strategic Impact Inquiry (SII) emphasizes that change needs to take place and be sustained in all three domains to achieve this impact. Change is also required in both private and public spaces (i.e. at individual, household, community and societal level) and CARE is doing cutting edge work across all these levels.



WHAT DOES CARE DO?

Mutual aid and solidarity: Collective action among poor women has also led to wins for up to 50% increases in wages in Nepal. Participants of work to support collaboration and communication among men and couples in the Asia-Pacific East, Southern and West Africa, projects reported stronger relationships, healthier and more robust livelihoods for families, and reductions in gender-based violence (Journeys of Transformation, Family Business Management Training, Pathways, Abatangamuco).

Social norms change: Breaking taboos and holding dialogues on social norms is linked to a 15% increase in modern family planning methods among program communities in Kenya (SAA). There is growing evidence on the deep potential for shifting social norms through community dialogue, campaigns and new media narratives toward gender justice (Tipping Point, EMERGE, TESFA). CARE has also been leading

work on translating theory to practice for measuring social norms change (SNAP Framework).

Inclusive and accountable institutions: Catalyzing poor women's analysis and engagement to ensure their rights through social accountability has also ensured their needs are reflected in government budgets (SETU), and that services and resources effectively meet their needs in health services and with markets (CSC, Citizen Monitoring). In the context of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, supporting gender integration has promoted women's leadership (Vanuatu) and inclusive resilience (Adaptation Learning Program).

Build on resilience for humanitarian action: Supporting solidarity groups among women and girls, POWER Africa in Burundi, EKATA groups in Bangladesh and Village Savings and Loans Associations in Mali and

¹CARE's Engaging Men and Boys for Gender Equality Series, Brief 1 (page 3), explains synchronisation and the programming elements evident in CARE's engaging men and boys work.



Niger have achieved greater food and nutrition security, and life-saving safety nets when disaster strikes. In the context of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, supporting gender integration has promoted women's leadership (Vanuatu) and inclusive resilience (Adaptation Learning Program).

Leadership and collective action: We know that strong social movements led by those most impacted by injustices are one of the most potent forces for cultural and political change. Movements for gender and justice have been central to passing legislation that protects individuals from domestic violence; ensuring better working conditions, wages and hours for working people; and affirming the worth and dignity of Dalit people, queer and trans people, poor people, indigenous and racially/ethnically marginalized people, incarcerated people the world over. CARE has supported domestic worker alliances to advocate for national legislation in Ecuador and Bolivia to protect domestic worker rights, and women's leadership and national action against GBV in the Great Lakes region of Africa. CARE has also built up the leadership and networks of women members of VSLA groups to enter – and win – in electoral politics.

Living up to - our standards: the Guidance Note on CARE's Gender Equality and Women's Voice approach outlines CARE's Theory of Change, the main models and innovations we use across the organization and our approach to partnership. It also includes a set of 10 gender standards required of all CARE offices (see box on following page). The CARE Gender Marker has recently been expanded to be used in both humanitarian and development programming, to help teams measure the integration of gender into programming from harmful to transformative, using a simple grading system from 0 to 4. The marker should be used in all project proposals, and at least once a year in all projects, as part of project review and planning (with the resulting scores included in CARE's Project Information and Impact Reporting System (PIIRS)).

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

1. CARE recognizes that systems of inequity – around gender, ethnicity, ability, class, etc. – are ingrained in how we are raised, see and navigate the world as individuals and as an organization. CARE works to embed a culture of equity and justice into our organization. **Embedding Gender, Equity and Diversity into the DNA of our workforce, organization and work** will model internally the world we seek and have multiplier effects on our impact – in the depth, sustainability of change – as well as a catalytic affect to inspire others (including donors, corporations) to act.
2. To work responsibly, **CARE must monitor the changing protection risks and needs, and the unintended consequences, and take steps to mitigate risks of harm.** This requires tracking how programming understands, engages and affects people of different genders and other characteristics in distinct ways (see the CARE Gender Marker).
3. Program approaches that **facilitate solidarity and collective action** (e.g. EKATA, POWER Africa, SAA) can be key drivers for reaching outcome goals (e.g. reducing child stunting) AND advance gender equality.
4. In collectives, CARE's research shows that groups that include **a mix of men and women, and women leaders**, perform better than other group compositions - whether the outcome goal is around income, leadership, domestic decision-making, production, violence and time use.
5. **Activities during a humanitarian response can increase and reinforce, or reduce, existing inequalities.** CARE is committed to advancing **gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through humanitarian action.**
6. Gender equality requires programming approaches that: advance women's empowerment, meaningfully engage men and boys, and challenge structures (changing policies AND informal practices, social norms, etc.) in favor of women and girls' rights. We will never achieve sustainable gender transformative impact unless we **work strategically across all three of these domains (agency, relations and structures).**

CARE International Gender Standards

HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES WILL:

1. Incorporate gender and power analysis¹⁰ and data disaggregated by sex, age and other diversity factors to inform actions, with participation by staff, partners and project participants.
2. Articulate how programming will work across all three domains of the Gender Equality Framework and the Governance Programming Framework,¹¹ explicitly state gender equality results and include gender sensitive indicators for every stage of the project or programme cycle.
3. Include a gender strategy or gender action plan outlining roles, responsibilities, funding, work plans and accountability to meet gender requirements.
4. Identify potential programming risks and take steps to mitigate unintended consequences of backlash and gender-based violence, regardless of sectoral focus, especially in fragile and conflict contexts.
5. Form partnerships with women's rights movements to better collaborate towards shared goals and elevate the voice of marginalised people.
6. Undertake participatory gender reviews of projects or programmes, document best practices and challenges, and create mechanisms for cross-learning within CARE and with partners.

¹⁰Does not have to be a separate process, however any situational analysis or formative analysis must include a gender lens.

¹¹GPF – building consciousness among marginalised groups, giving voice to inequalities and building skills for collective action; working with power-holders to be more responsive to the rights of marginalised people of all genders; and facilitating dialogues between power-holders and marginalised groups.

ORGANISATIONALLY, CARE OFFICES WILL:

7. Analyse human resource policies and practices with a gender lens and ensure all annual operating plans, job descriptions and performance plans reflect CARE's commitment to gender equality.
8. Recruit, retain and reward staff and identify partners with a commitment to gender equality; build staff and partner capacity and skills in gender equality; report annually on gender balance in staffing and governance structures and implement specific strategies to balance male/female representation including in emergencies.
9. Regularly report to programme participants, donors and the public on progress on gender equality in CARE's work through appropriate reporting channels.
10. Review and build organisational capacity to implement these standards.



WANT MORE INFORMATION?

See the Gender, Power and Justice Primer, the Gender Orientation Pack, and the GEVW Guidance Note. Or contact Theresa Hwang or Diana Wu or Allison Burden.

CARE International Secretariat
Chemin de Balxert 7-9
1219 Châtelaine, Geneva
Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 795 10 20
Fax: +41 22 795 10 29
cisecretariat@careinternational.org
www.care-international.org

