



CARE International Gender Policy

February 2009

This Gender Policy defines CARE's explicit commitments to support gender equality and the principles expressed in these international agreements. The accompanying implementation guideline sets out mechanisms and minimum common standards for all CARE members and Country Offices. This policy statement therefore strives to make our collective programming efforts more effective, builds on commitments made in the existing Policy Statements and reflects subsequent developments in gender equality policies of development organizations working to end poverty and social injustice. It thereby sets the stage for increased accountability.

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Gender Policy Commitments

Through this policy CARE seeks to promote equal realization of dignity and human rights for girls, women, boys and men, and the elimination of poverty and injustice. Specifically, this policy is intended to improve the explicit incorporation of gender in programmatic and organizational practices.

CARE International¹ commits to:

- a. Promote gender equality as an explicit internationally recognized human right.
- b. Address systemic and structural practices that create barriers to the realization of women's rights and gender equality; including prevention and response to gender based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse.
- c. Support the empowerment of women and girls as a key strategy toward ending poverty, conflict, human suffering and gender inequality.
- d. Actively involve men and boys as allies in promoting gender equality.
- e. Analyze and implement strategies to manage potential risks and harms to women, girls, boys and men.
- f. Engage and coordinate with partners, governments, funders and civil society organizations to promote and support effective, creative and impactful ways to promote gender equality
- g. Monitor, evaluate and institutionalize organizational learning regarding specific gender equality results.
- h. Actively hold ourselves and others accountable to gender equality standards.
- i. Ensure that key organizational policies, systems and practices including but not limited to budgeting, human resource recruitment, training and management, and decision making support women's rights and gender equality.
- j. Ensuring adequate funding to realize our commitments.
- k. Apply these commitments within CARE and across all programme areas using integrated planning approaches and recognized gender sensitive tools and techniques such as gender analysis frameworks, collection of age/sex disaggregated data, and results-focused design and evaluation.

¹ Through out this policy the term CARE International (CI) is used to denote every CARE office including members of the federation and regional, sub-regional and country offices.

Policy Implementation

The policy is accompanied by proposed implementation arrangements, common standards and supporting definitions. More operational guidance and enforcement will be developed by CI members supported by the CI Gender Network as required to support the policy implementation. To ensure the policy is effectively applied and achieves expected results, each CARE member can further tailor implementation to their own organizational arrangements.

Policy review

CI will work collaboratively to undertake a review of this common gender policy. This will take place after four years. The CI member representatives in the CI Gender Network will report annually their progress in regard to their respective implementation plans. An annual summary report will be submitted by the CI Gender Network to the CI Board via the CI Secretary General.

CARE INTERNATIONAL GENDER POLICY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

Mechanisms for implementation

CI will implement, monitor and evaluate this policy. Each CARE member is encouraged to devise a context-specific and realistic implementation plan / process, with appropriate investment of resources, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.



Common Standards in Support of Gender Equality

CARE members are required to meet these standards in order to end poverty and support the dignity of all people.

CARE members will ensure that the following standards are applied, monitored, adhered to and reported on:

1. Key organizational policy, planning and programmes will:
 - incorporate gender and power analysis as a mandatory operational and/or design feature.
 - be based on data disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant diversity factors such as ethnicity, religion, caste, etc.
 - i) explicitly state gender equality results and ii) include relevant and feasible gender sensitive indicators for every stage of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
 - i) ensure sufficient funding to meet gender requirements and ii) formulate staff work plans and budgets accordingly.
2. Human Resources policies and practices will adequately address gender equality. CARE members will track and report annually on gender balance in staffing and governance structures and implement specific strategies to balance male/female representation.
3. CARE executive and senior management staff report regularly to beneficiaries, donors and the public on progress on gender equality in CARE's work through appropriate reporting channels.
4. Each CARE member (office) must assess and enhance accordingly the organizational capacity for the implementation of the policy.



ANNEX I - Background, Scope & Rationale

Background

This harmonized policy represents the first step of CARE International (CI) to take a cohesive and coordinated approach to gender. The policy is based on the content of CARE International members' and Country Office's gender policies². The policy defines CARE's explicit commitments to support gender equality and the principles expressed in these international agreements. The policy can be tailored to maintain and complement CI members' diversity, whilst supporting common strategies and standards of action and accountability.

CARE's vision is to seek a world of hope, tolerance and social justice; where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security. As part of CARE International's Mission Statement and programming principles³, CARE commits to address discrimination in all its forms. CARE recognizes that power relations between girls and boys, men and women are unequal, and that such inequalities should be addressed. As such, CARE must approach its work in a gender sensitive way.

Purpose

Through this Policy, CARE commits itself to ensure that gender equality is fully incorporated in all CARE work both as an end in itself as well as a means to overcome poverty more effectively. CARE seeks to promote equal realization of dignity and human rights for girls, women, boys and men, and the elimination of poverty and injustice. By articulating common standards and commitments, this harmonized policy aims to:

- Create a transparent and consistent message on CARE's commitment to gender equality at an international level and facilitate working relationships with national governments and other international organisations
- Create synergies by combining the strengths, good practice and lessons learned to-date by CI members who have existing policy-level documents
- Reduce the problem of mixed messages being received by Country Offices on the gender and development philosophy, objectives and requirements of different CARE members supporting operations in each Country Office
- Facilitate more coordinated action by CARE members at the international, regional and country levels
- Streamline Country Office programming considerations in relation to gender
- Facilitate common accountability mechanisms for Country Offices and Regional Management Units such as common 'meet or exceed' minimum standards
- Facilitate the tailoring of implementation approaches to Country Office needs while concurrently producing comparable results against CI-wide objectives for gender equality and women's empowerment
- Provide credibility in engaging with partners and allies on gender at both programming and advocacy.



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2 Information has been drawn from policies, guidelines or high-level strategies from CARE Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Norway, USA, and from India and Bangladesh COs. These documents represent significant consultation with a wide range of CARE staff and partners about gender in CARE's work.

3 An elaboration on how gender is embedded within each programming principles is provided in Annex III.

Scope

This policy describes specific commitments, implementation mechanisms and common standards for CARE to ensure gender equality is fully incorporated in its work. It calls on CI to work in a collaborative way towards the goal of gender equality in all aspects of our work, as well as urges individual members to strengthen their own actions to ensure the human rights of women, girls, boys and men are equally promoted and protected.

Rationale

While there has been emphasis by CARE on promoting gender equality in all aspects of its work, evaluations point to clear gaps in promoting gender equality. Internally, within CARE International, many individual CARE project proposals, evaluations and reviews point to the importance of gender analysis and interventions to promote gender equality in order for us to make a significant impact on poverty and social injustice. CARE USA's Strategic Impact Inquiry (SII) focusing on women's empowerment is one of the most comprehensive organizational scans of how well CARE advances women's empowerment. The SII process revealed a startling lack of organizational clarity on how gendered power shapes poverty, and how we should respond. One of the key recommendations that resulted from the SII is the need to clarify and commit to organizational policy framework, and then accountability systems to drive it.

In the external environment that CARE operates in, there are a variety of international norms and standards that guide CARE to fully embrace gender equality and the empowerment of women in all areas of work.

International humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law share a common goal in aiming to prevent and relieve suffering, and to protect and promote the rights and freedoms of women, girls, boys and men. As such, they complement and reinforce each other, thus providing a comprehensive framework to ensure equal rights of women, girls, boys and men.

International commitments upholding the human rights of women and detailed thematic implementation strategies have been ratified and signed by CI home and host governments. These include the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the commitments laid out in the Millennium Development Goals, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820 and the Agenda 21.

Reference is also made to the IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) policy statement on Gender Equality Programming in Humanitarian Action, including national commitments and regional commitments to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.



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ANNEX II - Gender Definitions for CARE International Policy

Gender

refers to the social differences between females and males throughout the life cycle that are learned, and though deeply rooted in every culture, are changeable over time, and have wide variations both within and between cultures. "Gender," along with class and race, determines the roles, power and resources for females and males in any culture. Historically, attention to gender relations has been driven by the need to address women's needs and circumstances as they are typically more disadvantaged than men. Increasingly, however, the humanitarian community is recognizing the need to know more about what men and boys face in crisis situations.

Gender equality

or equality between women and men, refers to the equal enjoyment by women, girls, boys and men of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that their enjoyment of rights, opportunities and life chances are not governed or limited by whether they were born female or male.

Gender Equality Programming

is an umbrella term encompassing all strategies to achieve gender equality. Important examples include gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, prevention and response to GBV and SEA, promotion and protection of human rights, empowerment of women and girls, and gender balance in the workplace.

Gender equity

Justice in the distribution of resources, benefits and responsibilities between women and men, boys and girls. The concept recognises that power relations between girls and boys, men and women are unequal, and that such inequalities should be addressed.

Gender mainstreaming

is a globally recognized strategy for achieving gender equality. The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations defined gender mainstreaming as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. For CARE, mainstreaming gender means applying gender analysis to all aspects of our work, including advocacy and communications. Gender is not a separate issue; it crosscuts all issues and sectors.

Gender-based violence

is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between females and males. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries and regions. Examples include sexual violence, including sexual exploitation/abuse and forced prostitution; domestic violence; trafficking; forced/early marriage; harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation; honour killings; and widow inheritance.

Sexual Exploitation

The abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. (UN SGB Definition)

Sexual abuse

The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Women's Empowerment

Involves awareness-raising, building of self confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. Empowerment comes from within; women empower themselves. Increase women's power through power to; power with and power from within which focus on utilizing individuals and collective strengths to work towards common goals without coercion or domination.

ANNEX III - Gender Equality & Diversity and the CARE Programming Principles

Social Justice, Tolerance, Dignity and Security are at the center of our Vision and enshrined in the six programming principles of CARE. The objective of our Gender Equality and Diversity work is to support the critical processes for achieving that vision.

Principle	What does it mean?	How does GED relate to this?
Principle 1: Promote Empowerment	We stand in solidarity with poor and marginalized people, and support their efforts to take control of their own lives and fulfill their rights, responsibilities and aspirations. We ensure that key participants representing affected people are involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of our programs.	Understanding and engaging the power relations between women and men and between other subordinate and dominant groups and empowering women and other marginalized groups is a critical part of our work on promoting Gender Equity and Diversity. CARE's GED Training Curriculum and Resources offer analytical tools and strategies to advance this principle. Having good quality staff relationship with our communities will help in designing and implementing more relevant and empowering programs. Appreciating and understanding diverse perspectives will create more innovative solutions to complex problems.
Principle 2: Work in partnership with others	We work with others to maximize the impact of our programs, building alliances and partnerships with those who offer complementary approaches, are able to adopt effective programming approaches on a larger scale, and/or who have responsibility to fulfill rights and alleviate poverty through policy change and enforcement.	This principle implies that CARE will be working with a variety of organizations that may be similar as well as those who may be quite different from us. CARE may be in a dominant position with respect to the national/local partners and may be in a subordinate position with respect to some Governments and Donor organizations. Being aware and appreciative of the differences and the power dynamics will enable CARE to have effective engagement and beneficial relationships with a variety of Partners.
Principle 3: Ensure Accountability and Promote Responsibility	We seek ways to be held accountable to poor and marginalized people whose rights are denied. We identify those with an obligation toward poor and marginalized people, and support and encourage their efforts to fulfill their responsibilities.	Accountability is one of the four leverage areas (along with Representation, Trust, Learning & Effectiveness) for advancing Gender Equality and Diversity. GED awareness tools can be strategically used to work with those with an obligation towards the poor and the marginalized to create awareness about their power, privileges, and rights and encourage their efforts to fulfill their responsibilities.
Principle 4: Address Discrimination	In our programs and offices we oppose discrimination and the denial of rights based on sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, class, religion, age, physical ability, caste, opinion or sexual orientation.	The primary objective of our Gender Equality and Diversity work is to understand and address the individual, group, institutional, and societal discrimination of people based on Gender and other Diversity factors. Gender issues are prevalent in almost all the countries where CARE operates, and women are in subordinate positions. Consequently, women form a critical mass of the poor and marginalized people that CARE seeks to support in their efforts to fulfill their rights.
Principle 5: Promote non violent resolution of conflicts	We promote just and non-violent means for preventing and resolving conflicts, noting that such conflicts contribute to poverty and the denial of rights.	CARE increasingly works in many situations strife with ethnic and other forms of conflicts that are violent and targets specific minorities or subordinated groups of people. These leave physical, social and psychological scars that leave them vulnerable for the remainder of their lives. Gender-based violence, including domestic violence, is prevalent in many communities in which CARE works. This scars women physically and psychologically; severely affecting women's dignity and personal security and suppresses their potential to take control of their lives.
Principle 6: Seek Sustainable Results	By acting to identify and address underlying causes of poverty and rights denial, we develop and use approaches that ensure our programs result in lasting and fundamental improvements in the lives of the poor and marginalized with whom we work.	Unequal gender relations are one of the underlying causes of poverty and rights denial that cuts across most of the communities that CARE works in. Implementing strategies to improve the social agency, structures, and key relationship positions of women and other diverse subordinated and marginalized groups will result in lasting and fundamental improvements in the lives of people with whom we work.

We hold ourselves accountable for enacting behaviours consistent with these principles, and ask others to help us do so, not only in our programming, but in all that we do. Our organizational focus and on-going commitment to Gender Equity and Diversity is specifically aimed at holding ourselves accountable to these principles in all that we do.



CARE Gender Policy - Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where can I find a copy of the policy?

The policy is available in French, English, Spanish, Arabic and Portuguese on the Gender Wiki <http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/> or search for "care gender wiki".

2. Why is CARE focusing on gender equality?

CARE defines gender equality as the equal enjoyment by women, girls, boys and men of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards. CARE believes that an individual's enjoyment of rights must not be governed by their birth as female or male, and that gender equality is an explicit, internationally recognised human right. So at CARE we recognise that poverty will not come to an end until women have equal rights with men. In our six decades of experience, we realise that focusing on the empowerment of women and girls benefits whole communities. As a leading humanitarian organisation dedicated to fighting poverty and social injustice with a particular emphasis on women and girls, CARE is also more credible if we do what we say.

3. Why was a policy developed?

The policy marks a major step in reconfirming CARE's commitment to ending poverty and social injustice by promoting gender equality in our programmatic, advocacy and organisational practices. It provides a consistent gender and development philosophy, objectives and requirements that all CARE members and country offices can support. This can facilitate more coordinated action by CARE at international, regional and country levels and streamline country office programming considerations in relation to gender.

4. How was the policy developed?

The policy was developed in 2008 by the CARE International Gender Network. Information was drawn from policies, guidelines and high-level strategies from CARE Australia, Österreich, Canada, Danmark, Norge, USA, and from India and Bangladesh country offices. These documents represent consultation with a range of CARE staff and partners about gender in CARE's work. Each CARE member was consulted during the drafting of the policy. The policy was presented to the CARE International Secretariat and was formally approved by the Executive Committee in February 2009.

5. Who is covered by the policy?

Throughout the policy the term CARE International (CI) is used to denote every CARE office which includes all CARE International members of the federation, regional management units and country offices. Thus every CARE member, and by extension country office, is covered by the policy.

6. What is included in the policy?

The policy outlines a set of general commitments and importantly, sets out a number of specific Common Standards that each CARE office must implement, monitor and evaluate. The policy also provides relevant definitions and describes how gender equality and diversity are linked to the six CI Programming Principles.

7. What does this mean for country offices?

Country offices and regional management units are required to meet the Common Standards and encouraged to devise a context-specific and realistic implementation plan including monitoring and evaluation. Every country office should assess and build organisational capacity to implement this policy. Appropriate resources need to be invested to realise the commitments. For additional technical support and resources, refer to your lead member and/or CARE project partner.

8. What does this mean for CARE International members?

Each CARE International member is required to meet the Common Standards so is encouraged to devise a specific and realistic implementation plan including monitoring and evaluation. Every member should assess and build organisational capacity to implement this policy. All CARE members are actively encouraged to participate in the CI Gender Network to access technical resources and support.

9. Does the policy place any emphasis on diversity?

While some CARE members individually accord equal importance to diversity as to gender equality, across the CARE International membership there is joint commitment specifically to gender equality and women's empowerment. We understand that inequality presents itself differently in different contexts and our work on gender equality and women's empowerment can help us understand these broader dynamics. Some CARE members have strategies that deal with both gender and diversity. You can find out more from your lead member.

10. Are individual CARE member gender policies still applicable?

The intent of the Policy was to facilitate comparable and consistent application of gender policy commitments across CI members and to provide a common policy platform. Any additional relevant policies developed by CARE members will be in line with the CI Gender Policy and provide only additional (and not contradictory) elements.

11. How will each member report on implementation?

CARE members are required to report to the CI Secretariat, via the CI Gender Network, on progress towards implementation of the Common Standards. The first report is due in July 2011 and every two years after that. To support CARE members in the implementation of the policy, the CI Gender Network has developed an action plan. For details contact any member of the CIGN listed on the Gender Wiki.

12. How does the policy fit with CARE's commitment to women's empowerment?

Women's empowerment is an essential component of gender equality. CARE has conducted significant impact research into women's empowerment since 2005 and has developed a Women's Empowerment Framework that has direct relevance to CARE's work. Many useful findings and recommendations have been generated focusing on both programming and organisational elements. In November 2009, the CARE International Board decided that CI would globally align CARE's brand around the theme of women's and girls' empowerment.

13. Where do I find more CARE resources?

- CARE Gender Toolkit <http://pqdl.care.org/gendertoolkit/default.aspx>, wide range of gender analysis tools
- Strategic Impact Inquiry into Women's Empowerment <http://pqdl.care.org/sii/default.aspx>, in particular the briefs on the Overview page/SII Essentials column.
- Program Quality Digital Library <http://pqdl.care.org/default.aspx>, go to the gender tab under PQI Resources.
- Gender Wiki (knowledge sharing) <http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/>, currently under redesign so keep checking for new material.
- CARE Academy <http://www.careacademy.org/>, see the Gender Equity & Diversity basics online course.
- CARE Emergency Toolkit, <http://www.careemergencytoolkit.org>, username: cet@care.org, password: staff, see Chapter 9 on Gender.
- CARE's 'Strong Women, Strong Communities' report explains CARE's holistic approach to empowering women and girls in the fight against poverty. <http://www.care.org/downloads/womens-empowerment-report-201005.pdf> or: <http://www.careaustralia.org.au/Document.Doc?id=368>