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Gender in Emergencies Guidance Note Gender Sensitive Partnerships

This guidance note provides a checklist of key questions to explore for gender sensitive selection of partners and is targeted at CARE staff who are involved in partnership strategy, selection and engagement with partners. This document draws heavily from the Gender and Partnership work undertaken as part of the Strategic Impact Enquiry process (SII).

Partnership: a strategic priority for CARE

The CARE International Humanitarian and Emergency Strategy has identified diverse and strategic partnerships as an essential ingredient in transforming and amplifying the impact of our work. Strategic Priority 3 states that CARE will forge new operational models which expand and nurture strategic partnerships with traditional and non-traditional actors at the local, national, regional and global levels. As gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is at the centre of CARE's humanitarian efforts, working with gender-sensitive partners is a critical component of our partnership work.

Partnerships are based on shared vision, values, objectives, risk, benefit, control, and learning as well as joint contribution of resources. Partnering can play an important role in emergencies—local partners often have the community acceptance, ready access to remote and vulnerable communities and the language and cultural

sensitivities that are required for an effective response. Partnerships to implement relief activities in emergencies are often contract-based relationships with local agencies, known as 'sub-granting'. But effective partnerships for emergency response start well in advance of an emergency and should go beyond sub-granting.

Checklist for gender sensitive partner selection

This checklist sets out five key areas with a set of guiding questions to assess the extent to which partners are or have the capacity/interest in gender sensitive responses.

1. Selecting partners who promote our understanding of gender issues

Focus questions:

- Is gender sensitivity a criterion for partner selection?
- Do we have partners with specific gender expertise such as people with academic training in gender analysis, people with experience working with women's and men's experiences, people connected with social movements?
- How does our partner's identity - membership, purpose or goals, values and culture, history - complement our knowledge and experience with gender?

- What types of networks can we work through to gain support: informal support networks, formal internal networks, gender focal point networks, external advocacy networks, electronic networks, donor networks, etc.?
- Does the partnership help to build coalitions of women's civil society organizations, or to promote women's voice and leadership in "mainstream" organizations?

2. Building our mutual capacity for gender sensitive work

Focus questions:

- What mechanisms are in place to help us assess our partner's gender awareness and capacity?
- How can we best work with our partners to build their capacity for gender sensitive work? To learn from them?
- Are we willing and able to provide our partners with the resources they need to build their capacity for gender sensitive work? For example, training, time, permission to innovate, ideas and information, etc.
- Are there measures for ensuring women's participation and gender equity when evaluating the partnership?

3. Developing gender sensitive working relationships

Focus questions:

- Do we use gender sensitive processes for managing partnerships and communicating with our partners?
- Are our partners able to challenge us as well as support us?
- Do CARE staff have the knowledge and skills they need to seek common ground with partners on gender issues?
- Are we prepared to listen and respond to feedback and criticism from partners?

4. Building capacity for gender sensitive implementation

Focus questions:

- Do CARE and partner organizational policies and systems support gender-sensitive

practice, including recruitment, training, budgeting, logistics and security?

- Does the partnership or staff selection process assess capacity for gender sensitive work?
- Do CARE staff, consultants, and partners have the attitudes, knowledge, and skills they need to interact effectively with marginalized groups such as women?
- Do CARE staff, partners and other stakeholders have access to gender expertise and support, including funds for training?
- How will the project maintain regular contacts with gender focal points in the organization and in partner organizations?
- What opportunities exist to promote cross-learning and reflection on gender among staff, participants and partners?
- Do CARE and partner staff have opportunities to reflect on gender lessons learned on an on-going basis?

5. Selecting gender sensitive methods and tools

Focus questions:

- As well as basic material needs, will CARE and partner activities promote women's awareness of discrimination, full participation at the family and community level and control over resources, information, personal autonomy, decision-making?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of working with women-only or male-only groups, versus mainstreaming gender equity in mixed groups?
- How can participant action-learning be promoted during the implementation of key activities? What roles do our partners play?

Want more information?

- Email the Gender in Emergencies team at emergencygender@careinternational.org.

Key documents:

- CARE International Gender Policy (in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese) [here](#).
- CARE International Policy on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (in French and English) [here](#).

Annex 1: CARE Partner Gender Assessment Guide

CARE Partner Capacity Assessment: Gender

CARE has established procedures for assessing partner capacity. These are outlined in the CARE Emergency Pocketbook.

Methodology: Review key documents and conduct interviews with staff and where possible with project beneficiaries

Organization's Gender Capacity:

- How does our partner's identity - membership, purpose or goals, values and culture, history - complement our knowledge and experience with gender? (Organizational vision, mission and goals)
- Staffing:
 - a) Does the partner have gender-balance within its staff? How many male and female staff are in place at different levels, including volunteers?
 - b) Partner Leadership: Is it gender balanced?
 - c) Dedicated gender capacity or access to gender capacity:
 - i. Does the partner have specific gender expertise such as people with academic training in gender analysis, people with experience working with women and men's experiences, people from the movements?
 - ii. Have partner staff been trained in gender? What training options are available? What capacity does CARE have to train?

Capacity for gender sensitive implementation:

- a) What mechanism is in place within the partner organization to assess capacity for gender sensitive work by their staff?
- b) Do partner program staff have the attitudes, knowledge, and skills they need to interact effectively with marginalized groups such as women?
- c) Do partner staff have access to gender expertise and support, including funds for training?
- d) How will regular contacts be maintained between gender focal points in CARE and in partner organizations?
- e) What opportunities exist to promote cross-learning and reflection on gender among staff, and participants?
- f) Do partner staff have opportunities to reflect on gender lessons learned on an on-going basis?

Suggested Next Steps:

Make recommendations based on the analysis from the information gathered from the above questions.