



CARE International Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy

I. Introduction

CARE's vision is to seek a world of hope, inclusion, and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security. CARE puts gender equality and inclusion at the centre of all we do because we know that we cannot overcome poverty and social injustice until all people have equal rights and opportunities. We recognize that power relations between people are unequal, and that we must challenge patriarchy and promote gender equality to end poverty and achieve social justice. In CARE Vision 2030, gender equality sits at the heart of our programmatic ambitions and radiates through all our work. We seek to elevate the voice of those who are marginalised and leverage our organizational diversity and learning to tackle inequalities, promote inclusion and bring about lasting impact.

Through this policy, CARE¹ commits to ensuring that gender equality and inclusion are fully incorporated in all our work both as universal human rights and an end in themselves, as well as necessary steps to overcome poverty and social injustice. Working with others, CARE seeks to promote equal realization of dignity and human rights for all people, and the elimination of poverty and injustice.

CARE recognizes that gender is not binary, and that terms and definitions related to gender and sexuality are diverse and continue to evolve. To facilitate ease of reading within this policy we refer to "all people", (including age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, belief, ability, etc.) throughout. This demonstrates our recognition of, and ability to work with, adults and children, and individuals of all sexual orientations, gender identities and/or gender expressions, and exhibit our focus towards intersectionality to acknowledge that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression. Throughout this policy, when reference is made to all genders and ages, this includes (cisgender and transgender) women and girls, men and boys, as well as people who identify beyond the binary, and people of all sexual orientations.

CARE is committed to working towards disability inclusivity, in which all elements of our work are inclusive of, and accessible to, people with disabilities. Ensuring CARE's work is inclusive of, and supports the voice and agency of, people with disabilities is key to sustainably defeating poverty.

We commit to doing the work of antiracism. We know that to be anti-poverty is to be anti-racist. We will take on critical listening and learning and do more to make clear that fighting racial injustice is part of our commitment to social justice. We place these principles at the heart of our work, from how we hire and promote, govern and lead, and mobilize resources and partner – this will enable us to be more innovative and deliver faithfully on our mission.

This policy will be implemented in the context of local legal environments in alignment inspired by feminist principles.

II. Purpose

This CARE International policy represents CARE's commitment to take a cohesive and coordinated approach to gender equality and inclusion. The policy defines CARE's explicit intention to promote inclusion and the principles expressed in international agreements². The policy includes three core principles and commitments

¹ Throughout this policy the term CARE is used to denote every CARE entity, including Members, Affiliates and Candidates Transitioning to Membership (Candidates) of the Confederation, the Secretariat, and CARE's regional, sub-regional, and country offices

² Relevant International Agreements include: [Convention on the Political Rights of Women \(1954\)](#); [Convention to the Consent of Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage, and Registration of Marriages \(1964\)](#); [Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict \(1974\)](#); [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\) \(1979\)](#); [Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women \(1993\)](#); [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action \(PFA\) \(1995\)](#); [CEDAW's Optional Protocol](#); [Maputo Protocol – Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa \(2003\)](#); [Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence \(Istanbul Convention\) \(2014\)](#)

against which all parts of CARE International will be held accountable. These are consistent with other organizational and programmatic standards³.

The purpose of the Policy is to:

- Define and communicate clear commitments and consistent messages within CARE to ensure we all have a shared common understanding for action.
- Define and communicate clear engagements with a broader community to include partners, communities with whom we collaborate, and other key stakeholders.
- Hold ourselves accountable to continue to strengthen efforts to promote gender equity and inclusion in our organization, increasing CARE's integrity and credibility amongst donors, partners and allies as a leader in the gender equality and social justice space, in both programming and advocacy.

III. Core Principles

CARE is a rights-based confederation with a 10-year Vision that puts gender equality and inclusion at the heart of all we do and who we are. Gender equality is an explicit internationally recognized human right and CARE seeks to promote equal realization of dignity, security and human rights, and the elimination of poverty and injustice for all people of all genders, identities, ethnicities, beliefs, abilities, castes and ages. Our commitments are founded on the Human Rights Framework and globally agreed principles⁴, such as equality and non-discrimination. We embrace feminist principles. They are based on minimum standards set in international law and regional agreements⁵, in particular, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), as well as relevant soft laws⁶ and the global ambitions set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

CARE recognises that issues of gender inequality intersect with other forms of oppression based on unequal power relations, such as patriarchy, ableism, racism, caste and ethnic discrimination, ageism, sexual orientation and homophobia, religious discrimination, classism, colonial history among others.

CARE works with marginalized women and girls and their allies (including youth and social movement actors, feminist and gender focused organizations and progressive private sector actors and other key stakeholders etc.) to address structural barriers to the realization of women's rights and gender equality, social justice, peace, wellbeing, and a life free from violence.

IV. Commitments - What we need to do to implement the Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy

To enact these principles, CARE will fulfil the following 12 commitments and ensure that they are monitored, evaluated, and reported on as part of CARE's responsibility of transparency and accountability.

1. Incorporate participatory gender and power analysis⁷ and data disaggregated by sex, age, and other relevant diversity factors⁸ to inform actions across the programme/project cycle in all projects and initiatives.

³ This Policy is complementary to [CARE's vision and mission](#) and [CARE International Safeguarding Policy: Protection from Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse, and Child Abuse](#); the standards herein are consistent with those laid out in [CARE's Gender Equality Impact Area Strategy](#).

⁴ Human Rights Principles include: Universality and Inalienability, Indivisibility, Participation and Inclusion, Accountability and Rule of Law, Transparency, and Equality and Non-Discrimination

⁵ See footnote 2.

⁶ Soft laws are non-binding international standards such as resolutions in the Human Rights Council or General Assembly, General Comments by the CRC or CEDAW Committees, etc.

⁷ There are a variety of tools that can be used to do gender and power analysis; they are not necessarily separate processes, however any situational analysis must include an analysis of gender and power. In humanitarian settings a [rapid gender analysis](#) is required.

⁸ These may include: race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and identity, age, class, caste, religion, physical and mental ability

2. Design and implement all projects, programs, and initiatives to address the Gender Equality Framework, use the CI Global Indicators, and apply and use the Gender Marker to strengthen programs. This applies to all stages of the project cycle.
3. [Engage men and boys](#) in support of, and to promote, gender equality and women's empowerment, and work to shift gender discriminatory social norms, measuring the changes in gender equality that CARE and partners contribute to through this programming.
4. Identify potential programming risks of backlash and exposure to gender-based violence (GBV) throughout the program/project cycle and put in place mechanism to reduce risks and take deliberate action to protect, do no harm, and mitigate these unintended risk factors, regardless of sectoral focus, in all program contexts.
5. Form collaborative relationships with rights-based organizations, (e.g., women's rights, women led, social justice, human rights movements) and representative organizations (e.g., youth-led organizations, LGBTIQ+, Organizations for/of People with Disabilities, etc.) to collaborate in the achievement of shared goals and be closer to and elevate the voices of marginalized people. Engage key stakeholders (including other civil society, government, private sector, public and private donors) in the struggle for gender equality and inclusion in our design, implementation, learning, fundraising and advocacy.
6. Ensure evaluations and reviews do no harm, are participatory, and assess sex and age disaggregated progress towards gender equality outcomes. Ensure that they apply the CI gender transformative MEAL principles, document best practices and challenges, and create mechanisms for cross-learning within communities and CARE, and with partners.
7. Ensure all our human resources policies and practices are developed with a gender equity, diversity, and inclusion lens. Report on gender and diversity balance in staffing and governance structures along with average pay levels or other key indicators. Implement targeted strategies to redress any evidence of inequalities.
8. Recruit and retain staff with a commitment to gender equality and inclusion, and social and racial justice; build staff and partner capacity and skills in gender equality and diversity, and ensure all annual operating plans, job descriptions and performance plans reflect CARE's commitment to gender equality and inclusion.
9. Regularly report to programme participants, donors, and other stakeholders, on progress on gender equality and inclusion, and social and racial justice in CARE's programming and organization.
10. Take all measures to prevent and respond to all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and child abuse (SHEA-CA), promote staff awareness and training, and ensure there are effective systems for assessing, mitigating, and managing the risks of SHEA-CA, and reporting and monitoring.
11. Ensure external marketing, fundraising, advocacy, and communications, including all CARE public representatives, respect and uphold our commitment to gender equality and inclusion. This includes the use of respectful, dignified, inclusive, impartial, and authentic written, verbal, and visual communication that avoids bias, perpetuating stereotypes, and harmful norms, especially stereotypes based on gender, identity and ethnicity.
12. Systematically advocate and negotiate with donors for adequate flexible funding to meet the CARE International gender commitments - specifically addressing measures for Gender Equality & Inclusion integration, "do no harm"/gender-based violence prevention measures, prevention of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and child abuse (PSHEA-CA), and organizational gender equity and diversity.

V. Scope of Application

This policy applies across CARE's development and humanitarian programming, to all CARE entities that are a part of the CARE International confederation⁹, and to all CARE Employees and Related-Personnel.¹⁰

VI. Responsibilities

All CARE Employees and Related Personnel: it is the responsibility of all CARE Employees and Related Personnel to uphold the Core Principles and Commitments of this policy.

Senior Managers, Supervisors and Human Resource Managers: Senior Managers, Supervisors and Human Resource Managers must ensure that all CARE Employees and Related Personnel understand and comply with this policy. Human Resource Managers are also responsible for policies and procedures that ensure robust recruitment, induction, and training as per Commitments 7 and 8 above, whilst Senior Managers and Supervisors are responsible for performance management to ensure the implementation of the policy.

CARE International Members, Affiliates and Candidates

- CARE Members, Affiliates and Candidates will ensure this policy is implemented, monitored, and reported against every two years to the National Directors Committee. All National Directors will ensure reports are completed and submitted every two years.
- CARE Members, Affiliates and Candidates are responsible for defining work plans and procedures to uphold and operationalize this policy.
- CARE Lead Members will provide the necessary support to all forms of CARE engagement they are responsible for, including regional offices, country offices, and others. CARE Lead Members will ensure Country Offices have in place the resources to implement this policy.

CARE International Secretariat: The CARE International Secretariat will coordinate oversight of this policy and review and update as required. The CARE International Secretariat will provide support to the Gender Focal Points on the collection and analysis of reporting against the policy every two years.

VII. Associated Policies

This policy is complementary to the set of standards of behaviour that all CARE employees and related personnel are required to adhere to in the CARE International Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics and any further codes or related policies defined by CARE Members, Affiliates, Candidates, Country Offices, and the Secretariat.

This Policy is also a response to CARE's accountability to the communities it works with and is therefore to be operationalized as part of the broader CARE International Accountability Framework.

⁹ This policy will be implemented to the greatest extent possible, considering the legal frameworks of any given location/ country in which CARE works.

¹⁰ The term "CARE Employees and Related Personnel" includes all employees of any CARE office, as well as Board members, volunteers, interns, and consultants, including both individual and corporate contractors. Any organisation that has affiliated with or entered into partnership agreements of any form with CARE will be subject to due diligence processes to ensure relevant policy alignment"