A message from our Secretary General

2021 has been a devastating year for millions of men, women and children around the world facing unprecedented levels of humanitarian need, forced displacement, increasing climate-related emergencies and a second year of the global pandemic.

While lockdowns, restrictions and the tragic social and economic ramifications of COVID-19 continued, 2021 was the year where we also began to see more wide-scale inequities in how the pandemic was impacting different groups, especially stark for women and girls.

To understand these inequities better, CARE used tested tools that allow us to listen to the unique experiences women face in crisis, as shown in our ‘Women Respond’ Report, and adapt our programs accordingly. As one CARE colleague noted: “The world was responding with soap, face masks and social distancing, but the women we spoke to were telling us they couldn’t eat or feed their kids. They couldn’t possibly quarantine, so listening to these women was very different than listening to ourselves.”

2021 was also a key strategic year for the CARE International Confederation with the launch of our ambitious CARE 2030 Vision – a framework for defining the CARE of the future, and the impact we seek. It outlines six areas of impact for the organization, each of which are designed to address the underlying causes of poverty and social injustice. These include Gender Equality; Crisis Response; Climate Justice; Health; Food, Water and Nutrition; and Economic Justice.

As we look to the future, decolonial approaches, equitable partnerships, and embracing feminist principles remain essential to CARE’s efforts. We know that our programs are more impactful when implemented in partnership; which, in 2021, made up around 43% of all CARE projects and contributed to 56% of CARE’s total impact numbers. In 2021 we also launched our first Feminist Advisory Board made up of grassroots feminist activists from countries in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, to help guide our organizational, operational, and strategic thinking around gender equality and other intersecting areas.

Across the year, CARE International supported over 100 million people across 102 countries: from supporting those facing extreme hunger in places such as the Sahel, to addressing the needs of Venezuelan refugees and their hosts in South America. None of this great work would have been possible without our hardworking staff and partners from across the world, and the generous support of our donors.

I would like to thank everyone for their continued commitment as we continue to strive together towards a world of hope, inclusion, and social justice.

“I want to see more women in my community and around the world growing their influence. Imagine the impact if all women had the same opportunities as me!”

Hawa Abdalnabi, VSLA member in Sudan
The Quaker Crece program in Guatemala helps communities increase their resilience to climate change, address chronic malnutrition, and build women’s economic empowerment.

© CARE
We work around the globe to save lives, defeat poverty, and achieve social justice. We put women and girls in the center because we know that we cannot overcome poverty until all people have equal rights and opportunities.

Our commitment to being 'locally led, and globally connected' means working side-by-side with partners and communities to understand the root causes of poverty; find innovative, locally led solutions; and seek ways to support their scale up and sustainability. We publish the results and methodologies used in our projects to ensure transparency and accountability and advance the quality of our work.

MISSION FOCUS

About CARE International

CARE International is a global network of independent national organizations, which include CARE members, candidates and affiliates, social enterprises, and thousands of community-based partner organizations working together across more than 100 countries to save lives, end poverty and fight social injustice. The combined efforts of all parts of the CARE confederation supported our life-changing work in 102 countries in fiscal year 2021.

VISION

We seek a world of hope, inclusion, and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and all people live with dignity and security.

MISSION

We work around the globe to save lives, defeat poverty, and achieve social justice.

FOCUS

We put women and girls in the center because we know that we cannot overcome poverty until all people have equal rights and opportunities.

CARE International Confederation

The CARE International confederation consists of 16 national members, four candidates and one affiliate with a common vision and mission to defeat poverty. The CARE International Secretariat coordinates and supports the CARE network to achieve common impact goals and shared global priorities.

Current CARE members include: CARE Australia, CARE Canada, CARE Deutschland, CARE Danmark, CARE Egypt Foundation, CARE France, CARE India, CARE Japan, CARE Luxembourg, CARE Nederland, CARE Norge, CARE Österreich, CARE Peru, Raks Thai (Thailand), CARE UK, CARE USA

As part of our journey to diversify our membership, candidate members represent CARE International entities currently on a time bound journey to becoming full members.

Current candidates include: CARE Caucasus, CARE Czech Republic, CARE Maroc, Yayasan CARE Peduli (Indonesia)

Affiliate members are more independent parts of our network, they do not use the CARE brand identity, but work as part of the CARE network based on a shared set of goals and values and in line with our mutual strategic interests.

Current affiliates include: Chrysalis

This report has been developed by the CARE International Secretariat. It looks at the Financial Year 2021 which covers the period from June 2020 – July 2021 (unless otherwise specified).

Photo: Stephen Chilufya, a male gender champion at CARE’s SANI project, with his family in Zambia. © Karin Schermbrucker / CARE

Photo: Simon Chelinda, a male gender champion at CARE’s SANI project, with his family in Zambia. © Karin Schermbrucker / CARE
CARE International acknowledges the existence of divergent views to certain territories. CARE International aligns with United Nations sourced maps for consistency purposes; this use does not imply a political statement on any given country or territory.

CARE INTERNATIONAL COUNTRY PRESENCE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

1. Afghanistan
2. Albania
3. Armenia
4. Australia
5. Austria
6. Azerbaijan
7. Bangladesh
8. Belgium
9. Benin
10. Bosnia and Herzegovina
24. Democratic Republic of the Congo
25. Denuist
26. Ecuador
27. Egypt
28. El Salvador
29. Ethiopia
30. Fiji
31. Finland
32. Georgia
33. Germany
34. Ghana
35. Greece
36. Guatemala
37. Guinea
38. Haiti
39. Honduras
40. India
41. Indonesia
42. Iraq
43. Japan
44. Jordan
45. Kenya
46. Kiribati
47. Kosovo
48. Laos
49. Lebanon
50. Liberia
51. Luxembourg
52. Libya
53. Macedonia
54. Madagascar
55. Malawi
56. Mali
57. Mozambique
58. Montenegro
59. Morocco
60. Myanmar
61. Nepal
62. Netherlands
63. Nicaragua
64. Niger
65. Nigeria
66. Norway
67. Pakistan
68. Palestine
69. Papua New Guinea
70. Peru
71. Philippines
72. Romania
73. Rwanda
74. Samoa
75. Senegal
76. Serbia
77. Sierra Leone
78. Solomon Islands
79. Somalia
80. South Africa
81. South Sudan
82. Spain
83. Sri Lanka
84. Sudan
85. Switzerland
86. Syria
87. Tanzania
88. Thailand
89. Timor-Leste
90. Togo
91. Tonga
92. Turkey
93. Tuvalu
94. Uganda
95. United Kingdom
96. United States of America
97. Vanuatu
98. Venezuela
99. Vietnam
100. Yemen
101. Zambia
102. Zimbabwe
In 2021 CARE and its partners reached

100.2 MILLION PEOPLE

WITH 1,495 PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

ACROSS 102 COUNTRIES

In line with our CARE Vision 2030 to support 200 million people from the most vulnerable and excluded communities to overcome poverty and social injustice by 2030, 2021 saw ambitious strategic commitments across CARE to increase the scale, quality, impact and inclusivity of our global programming work.

Since 2015, CARE has been tracking impact metrics in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2021, CARE shifted to 30 impact indicators for CARE’s Vision 2030, still aligned with the SDGs. The SDGs represent a collective, global commitment to a transformed world. It is only right that an organization like CARE also be accountable to demonstrating how its work contributes to these shared goals toward this collective vision.

Between 2015 and 2021 CARE and our partners have contributed to global change for 161 million people in 83 countries.

Gender inequality is a key driver of poverty, as well as one of the most widespread forms of injustice, which is why CARE puts gender at the centre of all our work. For this reason, we monitor and measure all our programmes to ensure we are effectively addressing the rights and specific needs of women and girls.

We use the word “contributions” deliberately: in all our work, change happens through the combined efforts of many different actors, including civil society and movements, governments, and the private sector. Our programs are just some of the contributing factors that lead to these impacts and outcomes.

By applying CARE’s Gender Marker, in 2021 we found that 62.3% of all projects were scored as being at least ‘Gender Sensitive’ (for humanitarian projects) or at least ‘Gender Responsive’ (for all other projects).
In 2021 CARE humanitarian programs were able to reach more than 24 million people with humanitarian support, in coordination with local partners, governments, UN agencies and other humanitarian actors. CARE’s largest humanitarian programs were in Syria, Yemen, India, Bangladesh and Ethiopia, and our nexus programming improved the livelihood situation of at least 4 million people affected by crises, including through sustainable access to essential services, cash and shelter.

Humanitarian crises can both exacerbate inequalities and present opportunities for transformative change. CARE addresses gaps in women and girls’ meaningful participation in crisis decision-making through initiatives like our Women Lead in Emergencies (WLiE) approach. CARE also uses models such as the Rapid Gender Analysis, Village Savings and Loan Associations in Emergencies and Gender Sensitive Cash and Voucher Assistance, to empower women and girls in emergencies, address gender-based violence in crises, and promote community support for gender equality in humanitarian programming, including through engaging men and boys.

In Burundi, projects addressing gender and social norms led to households more than doubling their rice production, with women being 26% more likely to have enough food to eat.

In Ethiopia, strong social norms integration alongside other components like sexual and reproductive health and economic empowerment mitigated some of the harmful effects of child marriage. In Benin, empowering adolescents to mobilize for their rights to sexual and reproductive health and lives free from violence halved rates of child, early and forced marriage.

Across the year, CARE worked to address harmful gender norms which limit girls’ education outcomes and make them more vulnerable to violence in countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal and Somalia. We enhanced the ability of women and girls to influence decision-making, including through our highly successful Village Savings and Loans Associations programming.

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"We are women leaders in emergency. We have the capacity to say: I have a voice and a vote, I am not going to stay stagnant. To be able to say that, I have my skills and knowledge and that at any time I can go anywhere to participate."

Woman from Colombia, interviewed for CARE’s She Told Us So Again report.
CARE helped over 7 million women have greater access to, and control over, economic resources and opportunities in 2021, with particular impact across West, Central and Southern Africa, such as the ‘Worker Wellbeing Project’, which helped improve wellbeing and dignified working conditions for nearly 77,000 female factory workers across Bangladesh, Indonesia and Vietnam.

In 2021, 1.2 million women joined CARE-supported Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA), increasing their access to financial services. They join the now 13.7 million women who are part of a VSLA since 2015.

“I saw a lot of changes, women have had more right to express their concerns, dared to stand up to express their wishes to factory leaders.”

Deputy Head of Woman’s Union, involved in CARE’s Workers Wellbeing project in Vietnam.

In 2021, CARE and partners contributed to greater resilience or adaptive capacities for over 850,000 people. CARE and its partners also influenced changes in climate-relevant policies and legislation, increasing the ability of over 120,000 people to adapt to the effects of climate change, foster climate resilience and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Since 2015, our programs have made significant contributions to SDG 13, helping strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity for over 6 million people.

In Bangladesh and Vietnam, CARE worked with 207 groups, movements and institutions to amplify the priorities of the poorest and most marginalized in climate-related decision-making. CARE also collaborated on several research, policy and partnership initiatives relating to climate justice. These included signing the Red Cross Federation’s Climate and Environment Charter, an agreement with the Global Center on Adaptation to collaborate on a youth leadership and adaptation education project in 10 African countries, and a new partnership with the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens to train young women leaders in Africa on climate adaptation.
In 2021 our right to health programming impacted the lives of 809,186 people. Since 2015, CARE and partners have contributed to impacts for over 43 million people in relation to SDG 3 (health). The work included strengthening local health systems in the State of Bihar in India, improving maternal and new-born health in Tanzania, increasing access to quality health services, including sexual and reproductive health and rights services in Iraq, as well as supporting female frontline health workers in the COVID-19 response in Yemen.

As we move forward, CARE will continue to focus on building the assets and agency of women, girls, and other groups facing injustice. We will work to change power relations to enable collective voices and well-being. And we will help transform health systems and structures to ensure universal access to health.

In 2021 our food, water and nutrition programming reached 33.9 million people directly - 53% of them women and girls - and supported almost 2.5 million people to achieve their right to food, water and nutrition. We helped reduce food insecurity for 104,415 people and contributed to 10,295 children under five escaping stunting. CARE and our partners also improved access to water for 203,009 people and improved sanitation for 506,268 people.

Since 2015, CARE and partners have contributed to impacts for nearly 32 million people in relation to SDG 2 (hunger) and SDG 6 (water). In Ghana, for example, CARE and partners improved agricultural productivity for 30,000 small-scale producers, their families, and their communities, through increased availability, access, and use of good quality agricultural inputs.

Over the next 3 years, we aim to support around 25 million people (over half of them women) to produce more healthy food, have better access to water and sanitation, and improve their nutrition. This will include small-scale farmers, women and girls living in areas with poor access to water, and refugees and internally displaced people.

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Advocacy is essential to CARE International’s fight for gender equality and social justice and is a means through which we can multiply the impact of our work.

In 2021, our advocacy contributed to advancing the recognition and funding for women’s groups in crisis response; climate finance; gender transformative approaches in food security policy; expanding humanitarian access; and advancing a gender-just response and recovery to COVID–19.

Some advocacy and policy highlights in 2021 included:

- Global influencing across capitals, and in coalition with humanitarian partners, to support the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in making gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls a strategic priority for their work in 2022–23.

- Coordinating with partners, and targeting key governments, to agree a humanitarian exemption to sanctions regimes within the UN Security Council. This enabled the continued flow of humanitarian assistance into Afghanistan following regime change in August 2021, and led to the scale-up of critical operations to support the 22 million Afghans in need.

- Advancing gender-transformative approaches in food security policy at the Food Systems Summit in 2021 and beyond. CARE also worked with some of the largest food corporations to advocate for more sustainable, coherent and gender transformative corporate social responsibility.

- Policy influencing around UNFCCC COP26 in Glasgow, UK throughout the year included the release of CARE’s ‘Climate Adaptation Finance: Fact or Fiction?’ report which revealed how rich nations and institutions have been routinely over-reporting funding for developing countries to adapt to the climate crisis.
At CARE International we firmly believe that partnerships are purposeful relationships based on mutual trust, equality and learning, which engage the complementary strengths of all those involved to achieve greater impact together than we could achieve alone. We believe being “locally led and globally connected” will mean bigger, longer-lasting impacts on people’s lives and we are committed to forming equitable partnerships.

We recognize that in humanitarian contexts local actors are often better positioned and better able to provide appropriate assistance to affected people, and our preliminary data also shows that when we work with partners our interventions are of a higher quality and more impactful. For example, CARE projects implemented in partnership on average score 70% against CARE’s program quality standards, compared to 66% for projects that are not in partnership. As a signatory to the Grand Bargain and Charter for Change we strongly believe that humanitarian and development interventions should be “as local as possible, international as needed.”

In 2021, through the launch of Vision 2030, CARE committed to deepening its existing approach to partnerships for sustainable development and humanitarian assistance with an emphasis on amplifying local women leaders and movements. As part of this, we published a specific ‘Partnership Paper’ which outlined CARE’s strategy, aims and model for partnerships.

In 2021, as part of the Generation Equality Forum and the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies, CARE made important commitments to working in partnership on women’s economic justice and in humanitarian contexts. We committed to invest US$100 million by 2026 to strengthen and scale-up Savings Groups, and to support 10 million local women across 10 African countries to advance their own initiatives on economic justice and rights. CARE also committed to increase our support and resources for women, girls and gender non-conforming (GNC) people and the organizations they lead so they have preparedness, planning, response decision-making and accountability processes in at least 6 country contexts where CARE is implementing the Women Lead in Emergencies approach.

We are on an exciting path towards fully achieving our commitment to being ‘locally-led’ and will continue to reflect on and improve our partnerships. This includes by reviewing internal policies; setting partnership standards and ensuring we are accountable to them; making working with or through partners a default for all programs; increasing partnerships with women’s rights organizations and women-led and feminist organizations; working in partnership in humanitarian contexts; focusing more on the power relations within partnerships; as well as supporting social movements as allies and partners.
Advancing diversity, equity and inclusion; and promoting anti-racism

In 2021, we continued to work to improve our commitment to gender, equity and diversity within CARE, and continued our intentions to actively shift power, decolonise structures and ways of working, and advance anti-racism both internally and externally.

We integrated anti-racism and inclusion guidance into our Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy and have focused on conducting gender and diversity audits and improving our hiring practices in many of our offices as a path towards ensuring teams are diverse and balanced. We have rolled-out a specialised learning program for all staff through gender equity and inclusion dialogue workshops, to raise staff awareness and action planning in how to address oppression and be more deliberate around being anti-racist. Our scoring on the FairShare Index of women’s leadership improved from 13.4 in 2020 to 8.7 in 2022.

To improve our external communications, we developed new guidance for use throughout CARE, on working to address and challenge stereotypes within our storytelling, striving to co-create with partners and participants, applying justice and hope-based narratives, and actively seeking out and investing in local and female talent. CARE Australia also successfully piloted strength-based narratives for its annual FY21 Tax Appeal fundraising campaign and CARE USA set up a special Board to review tone and use of imagery in its fundraising to ensure images are respectful and avoid neo-colonial attitudes.

Climate justice: learning & collaboration

Throughout 2021, online training in the CARE Climate & Resilience Academy continued to strengthen the education of CARE colleagues and external development practitioners. As of June 2021, a total of 159 people from 48 different countries were trained through the Academy.

CARE’s carbon footprint

In 2021 CARE developed a Carbon Footprint and Climate-smart Practices Dashboard to show individual office’s Greenhouse Gas emissions from flights, vehicle usage, and office energy consumption and the measures implemented to reduce them over a 3-year period (2019–2021). CARE also launched its joint offsetting program - ‘BACHAT II’ - an improved cookstoves program through which CARE International members can offset their unavoidable emissions.

Our commitment to gender equality

In 2021 we conducted a review of our offices’ commitments to CARE’s Gender Equality Policy to enhance our impact and improve resource allocation. The report saw our overall scoring on the Gender Equality Policy increase from 56% (in 2019) to 59% in 2021 on program-related commitments.
Safeguarding
At CARE, we believe all people have a right to live their lives free from sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse, and that no child or adult should be subjected to abuse of any form by anyone associated with CARE.

In 2021, we improved our monitoring and accountability towards our Safeguarding Policy on Protection from Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse, and Child Abuse to enable continuous improvement in our commitments in this area. We introduced risk assessments and safer programming methods to help identify possible risks for where and how sexual misconduct could occur, and in ways that prevent incidents from happening. With COVID-19 restrictions impacting how we deliver face-to-face trainings on safeguarding, we also made an online training available for staff and partners.

CARE produced its fifth Transparency Report that includes anonymised case data on all reported incidents of sexual harassment, exploitation, abuse, and child abuse, from January to December 2021. As per our policy, we carefully examined all allegations and carried out investigations, and disciplinary action as needed. All our safeguarding activities are guided by a survivor-centred approach.

We also recognize our responsibility to ‘do no harm’ to anyone in our programs or the communities where we work. In the coming years, we will continue to enhance our safeguarding measures to be robust and accessible to all people who are associated with CARE. We are reinforcing our safer recruitment practices by using the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme, and will work together with our partners to strengthen capacity and understanding of safeguarding in our operating contexts.

Safety & security
Safe programming is key to all of CARE’s work. We implement a series of policies and strategies to keep all people safe in what unfortunately is becoming an increasingly hostile environment for NGOs to operate.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to be a catalyst for increased political and institutional fragility, and drove further insecurity, population migration, inflation, and destabilization in many of the areas where CARE works, impacting programming and staff travel. In response to the pandemic, CARE Safety and Security staff developed specific COVID-19 guidelines and related policies to enable CARE to continue its activities while also allowing staff to work safely. CARE staff from across the globe were provided with learning and development opportunities on safety and security protocols via CARE’s Online Safety Course and through use of our Personal Safety & Security Handbook which was translated into additional languages.

Within CARE, 220 security incidents were reported in 2021. This is a slight overall decrease from 2020 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which limited staff travel and how we delivered operations. 2021 did see an increase in the number of CARE staff injured compared to 2020. Countries where the highest number of incidents were reported included Afghanistan, Ecuador, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, South Sudan and Yemen. The majority of incidents reported were thefts (28%), followed by transport accidents (25%), threats to staff, including harassment and extortion (15%), and attacks on staff (12%).
Inclusive and accountable governance systems are central to bringing about the impact we want to achieve at CARE International. They help safeguard human rights and build trust with our stakeholders. The need for accountable and inclusive governance has never been more pressing. We know that poverty and inequality persist when those most disadvantaged have little control over the forces that affect them, and lack the knowledge, opportunities and confidence to speak up for themselves. We constantly seek ways to be better held accountable by the people we serve and partners we work with.

**Inclusive governance**

In 2021 CARE continued to work to adapt to the changing external environment. The CARE Egypt Foundation joined the CARE Confederation as a full member as part of our commitment to diversify our membership to become truly global, more diverse and equitable. A further two existing CARE Candidates – Yayasan Care Peduli in Indonesia and CARE International Maroc in Morocco – are also on track to become full CARE International members by the end of 2022. CARE also began the process of identifying new external Affiliates, including in South Africa, in order to bring more Global South voices and influence into our governance and decision-making.

We set up a Policy Framework and cross-Conference Policy-Governance team which aims to guide our work around new and revised policies, making the process more transparent, accountable and inclusive. A new Feminist Advisory Board (FAB) made up of feminist activists from Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East was also established. The FAB is a high-level and purposeful partnership with feminist activists, who are connected to social movements. It helps guide our organizational, operational, and strategic thinking, enabling CARE to operationalize impact around gender equality.

**Accountability & transparency**

CARE is committed to transparent reporting on how we work to meet international standards of quality and accountability for all our partners, staff, and the communities we work with. We are guided by our rights-based approach and programming principles to ensure that our partners and the communities we work with play an active part in planning, implementing and evaluating our work.

Feedback and Accountability Mechanisms (FAM) are critical to communicate transparently with project participants and to make adjustments that reduce the risk of doing harm. The feedback and complaints received help improve both program quality and CARE’s positive impact. The number of CARE projects covered by FAM have grown from 60% in 2019 to 72% in 2021.

In 2021 CARE also launched a new Accountability Dashboard structured around the three areas of CARE’s Accountability Framework: Impact, Organizational Performance, and Collaboration. The framework allows CARE Members, Candidates and Affiliates to measure and monitor progress against shared commitments and priorities. It represents an important step forward in CARE’s ambition to promote transparency, accountability and learning among our membership, and ultimately, with and to the communities and partners we work with. We have also built on our commitment to transparent reporting by adopting new Program Quality Guidelines that include accountability to the people we serve and partners we work with as one of ten key drivers of program quality.