

# GENDER EQUALITY



# INTRO

CARE has been working with allies and partners to advance gender equality for more than 20 years in 100 countries, during times of peace and stability as well as humanitarian crises. From 2015 – 2020, our efforts through CARE’s 2020 Program Strategy supported:

**12.4 MILLION WOMEN AND GIRLS TO**  
experience greater levels of empowerment

in 67 countries; more than 2.3 million women in 34 countries to drive positive shifts in attitudes and power dynamics linked to reductions in gender-based violence; and millions of women and girls across CARE’s global programming to raise their voices at all levels of decision making from the household to the global policy arenas. We also helped make strides towards equal access to education.

Through our 2020 Strategy, we also learned that CARE can be more effective with a stronger focus on gender equality and more equitable partnerships. Collectively advancing gender equality is therefore the central organizing principle of our Vision 2030 and at the heart of CARE’s programmatic and organizational ambitions.



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**GOAL:** By 2030, CARE’s overall aim is to support at least **50 million** people of all genders to experience greater gender equality in their lives (SDG 5 and SDGs 1, 4, 8, 10, and 16).

## WHY

As the SDG declaration states, “the achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities.” There is increasing evidence that systematic discrimination against women and girls has wide-ranging negative implications for global security and development, and negative consequences in terms of economic performance, food security, health, environment, governance, conflict, and stability<sup>1</sup>.

Globally, the loss in human capital wealth due to  
**GENDER INEQUALITY IS ESTIMATED AT \$160.2 TRILLION<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Hudson et al, 2021

<sup>2</sup>Wodon and de la Brière, 2018

COVID-19 has revealed and exacerbated existing inequalities, underscoring society's reliance on women on the front lines of crisis response and at home, while exposing structural inequalities that are setting women and girls back. The secondary impacts of COVID-19 include a shadow pandemic of GBV; declines in mental health; economic recession job losses; and hunger and food insecurity. CARE's systematic approaches to Rapid Gender Analysis show that women are often heavily impacted by these crises but not represented in decision making.

In all our impact areas – from humanitarian assistance to health equity and rights, to food and water rights security, to climate justice and women's economic justice – the evidence is clear that we will not have lasting impact if we do not address gender injustice. Promoting gender equality is the right thing to do. It is also the necessary thing to do to advance social justice and sustainable development for all.

## WHAT

BY 2030,  
**CARE** WILL SEEK  
TO SUPPORT  
50 MILLION PEOPLE  
OF ALL GENDERS

to experience greater gender equality in their lives. Recognizing that CARE can add most value by working with others to contribute to transformative social change, we will focus on the rights of women, adolescent girls, and marginalized groups in three areas critical to achieving gender equality: eliminating gender-based violence, increasing women's and girls' voice and leadership, and equal access to quality education.

We chose these three thematic areas because each of these is a critical lever to tackle gender inequality and social justice in its own right, and intersects with the achievement of goals in CARE's other impact areas: eliminating gender-based violence dismantles a profound human rights violation that inhibits social, developmental, and economic flourishing of survivors, their families and communities; increasing women's and girls' equal voice and leadership in all areas of private and public life is essential to represent and meet the needs and rights of people of all genders; and increasing equal access to education prevents or delays child marriage, early pregnancy, and child labor and increases girls' social, political, and economic agency and assets to seize their rights and unlock their potential.

While we seek greater gender equality for people of all genders, women and adolescent girls are CARE's primary impact population. Gender discrimination harms and disadvantages women and adolescent girls in greater numbers than any other group. This means that CARE, with our partners, must pay particular attention to how our programming, advocacy, and partnerships include, enable, and impact women and girls.

Gender discrimination also significantly harms people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. CARE will therefore redouble our commitment, reflected in the 2018 Gender Policy, to recognize that gender is not binary, and to expand and adapt our work with LGBTIQ+ communities.



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Our efforts to advance gender equality are grounded in CARE’s [Gender Equality Framework](#) (GEF), which is the Theory of Change for Vision 2030, and the tools and approaches we have developed to implement and assess our impact. We will need to adapt and scale proven models for gender transformation and to iterate and evaluate new and adapted approaches with our partners. We also will need to diversify our internal structures and increase leadership from the Global South, as well as follow the roadmap outlined in CARE’s Partnerships Paper to better partner with feminist movements and other actors committed to gender equality.

In sum, we will reach our goal by:



## WITH WHOM



CARE cannot advance social justice and reduce poverty acting alone. We aim to strengthen existing and grow new partnerships with women’s rights and LGBTIQ+ organizations and movements to collaborate in the achievement of shared goals and elevate the voice of marginalized people.

We will work to engage key stakeholders in the struggle for gender equality including other civil society, government, private sector, public and private donors. CARE has endorsed the Principles of Partnership (2007), the Charter for Change and the Grand Bargain (2016), and partnership is one of our core program principles. CARE’s Partnerships Paper provides a roadmap for making these commitments a reality over the coming decade.

# CASE STUDIES

## ENGAGING MEN TO ADDRESS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Eric and Olive received couples' training on positive power relations as part of the [Indashyikirwa](#) project in Rwanda. The project focused on preventing gender-based violence by working with men and women – as couples and individuals – to challenge harmful and restrictive constructions of masculinity and femininity that drive inequality leading to GBV. One of the central points the couple took away from the training was the importance of balancing power. There was “economic violence” in the relationship, which meant that Erik had full control over the family's property and finances. They now share this responsibility, and teach their children that there are no separate jobs for boys and girls.

Working with local partners [RWAMREC](#) and [RWN](#), and with funding from the UK Government's [What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls](#) program, [Indashyikirwa](#) has a wealth of qualitative and quantitative research and evidence to support the model's success. The project's [impact evaluation](#) found substantial and statistically significant overall reductions in the experience of physical and/or sexual IPV at 24 months of follow-up among both women and men.



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## GLOBAL PANDEMICS AND GIRLS' ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Education systems around the world have been disrupted by COVID-19, leaving an estimated 1.2 billion children out of school. Marginalized adolescent girls are heavily affected, facing the combination of school closures, higher workloads at home, extreme poverty, and the threat of gender-based violence. During this crisis, CARE is working with governments, teachers, girls' clubs, and communities to provide options for remote learning along with diverse forms of support tailored to adolescent girls' needs. Evidence shows that interventions on social norms change and girls' leadership skills development have contributed to an increase in communities' resilience during the crisis, reducing barriers to girls' participation in remote education and building conditions for adolescent girls to continue to learn.



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<https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/publications/adolescent-girls-education-and-covid-19-what-is-happening-in-the-field>



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## WOMEN'S VOICE AND LEADERSHIP

Women have a right to influence the decisions that affect their lives and yet this right is frequently denied. This continued exclusion of women from spaces of public discourse and decision making hinders our fight against gender inequality and injustice in the world.

In West Africa, CARE has consistently seen evidence that solidarity groups can provide a platform for women to demand change on the issues that they care about. **Women on the Move** has sought to address this critical component of gender justice by iteratively refining its approach, from using financial inclusion as a platform for women's collective action, toward an approach that more directly supports women's public participation, voice, and leadership. Another innovative approach, **Women Lead in Emergencies**, supports women in communities at the frontline of conflict and disaster to overcome barriers to their participation, and to take the lead in meeting the needs of their communities. Women Lead brings tried-and-tested approaches from development programmes into our humanitarian response to:

- Enable women to identify their own priorities and act on them
- Put decisions on how to spend programme funds in the hands of women
- Support **them** to engage with community leaders, governments, and humanitarian agencies to access rights, services, and assistance.