

CARE International UK Strategy 2023 – 2026

Women leading change in times of crisis



A woman with a voice has the power to change lives. When she stands to speak, she stands for her family, her community, her rights. Despite living in one of the most vulnerable places in the world – threatened by climate change, humanitarian crises, poverty, and inequality – she has the determination and resilience to lead her community to recovery.

That's why CARE International UK's new three-year Strategy aims to promote a new model for sustainable change with women's leadership at its core.



Why should women lead in times of crisis?

Since 2020, the world has changed dramatically. The COVID-19 pandemic set back efforts to achieve gender equality by decades. The climate crisis is intensifying. Humanitarian need, driven by climate change and conflict, has increased to record levels.

Women and girls are most vulnerable and affected in times of crisis. Women and girls living in low and middle-income countries – who have contributed least to the climate emergency – bear the brunt of its impacts.

3 in 5 preventable maternal deaths take place in conflict, displacement, and disaster settings.¹

80% of backbreaking agricultural work is undertaken by women in developing countries. **2%** of agricultural landowners are women.

More than half of all displaced people are women and girls, and in countries such as Somalia, it's as high as **80%**.

But, women and girls on the frontlines of crisis also have power, resilience, and ability to adopt and lead the solutions their communities so desperately need. When supported to lead, women take collective action to address injustice and community tensions, solve problems, deliver services, and influence improved humanitarian responses.

We know that women's engagement in climate action can lead to better conservation outcomes and disaster readiness. And, their representation in national Parliaments leads to more stringent climate change policies, resulting in lower emissions.

¹ White Book 2017, UNICEF

The difference CARE makes

CARE has been fighting poverty and injustice in the world's most vulnerable places for over 80 years. When crisis hits, we are there. And, we stay there until we are no longer needed. Long after the news crews have gone, we continue working in the midst of the world's worst emergencies to support people through the overwhelming process of rebuilding their homes, lives and livelihoods.

We support women's leadership at the forefront of crisis, where progress on women's rights is too often under threat. For example, our Women Lead in Emergencies approach directs power and resources towards women in crisis-affected communities, so they can challenge and influence decisions made in their name. We have been leading the way on cutting edge climate change programming for over 20 years, working with partners and women's rights organisations to ensure the voices of women are listened to and acted on.

In 2022, CARE and partners:

supported **205** million people

across **111** countries

and **1,630** projects

Mary Mwiche at her homestead,
Chasosa Village in Shiwang'andu
District, Zambia.
© Karin Schermbrucker/CARE



Looking to the future

We recognise, however, that too much of our perspective in the past has been rooted in colonial power structures and unequal power dynamics. That's why our new Strategy intentionally moves power back where it belongs – into the hands of communities affected by crisis.

In particular, we will work with women who have the least say in humanitarian and climate action decision-making, to support them with the tools, funding and resources they need to become the driving force for change in their communities and countries.

And, we will urge our peers, supporters, and donors to join us, positively influencing attitudes and building momentum behind a powerful movement led by communities across the world.

Hanh is 12 years old. She lives with her parents and younger brother in Lai Chau province, Vietnam. Hanh's parents are both farmers. While she goes to school, her mother does most of the work on the family farm, including growing rice, sugarcane and vegetables.
© Vu Ngoc Dung/CARE

Where our name opens doors to networks, knowledge, and power, we support women activists, leaders and community members to walk through. Where our name means people listen, we ensure women from the countries where we work do the talking.



Our Goals 2024-2026

Over the next three years, we will deliver our mission through these prioritised goals:

1. Support women to lead on the frontlines of crisis

For decades, CARE has pioneered new, sector-leading approaches² to put women and girls' needs and rights at the centre of crisis response. We will continue to push boundaries through our approaches to women's leadership in emergencies.

By 2026 we will:

- Scale up our ground-breaking Women Lead in Emergencies model, ensuring women can decide and drive change in their communities.
- Put women's leadership at the forefront of our sector-leading emergency shelter responses.
- Work with communities to uncover innovative ways to address crises through women's leadership.
- Advocate for the UK to adopt a feminist foreign policy that supports women's rights and leadership.

As a result:

- Attitudes to women's rights will start to change in the communities we work with.
- More women will take on leadership roles in emergencies, driving better outcomes.
- Our work will lead to more lives saved, reduced harm and increased dignity and wellbeing, because it will better address women's needs and promote their rights.

2. Build equitable, sustainable partnerships with local organisations to deliver more impact for people facing poverty and crisis

For too long, local organisations have been seen as less capable than international organisations. In reality, local organisations have deep contextual knowledge and significant skills and expertise. We will seek to **recognise the power we hold, and intentionally give power, resources and space** to local organisations and communities, in particular to women-led organisations and women activists.

By 2026 we will:

- Make sure more than half of our active programmes put control of design, delivery, and decision-making in the hands of local partners who have most relevant knowledge and solutions.
- Ensure increasing amounts of our funding goes to local organisations.
- Work across the CARE confederation to provide the funding and services needed by local women's rights and women-led organisations, and civil society as a whole.

As a result:

- Our work will become more effective and better value for money.
- In time, CARE's role will change to work in solidarity with local partners, becoming a powerful network that promotes their voices and priorities.
- Local partners will become more sustainable and better able to achieve their own goals, increasing the resilience of local civil society.

² We pioneered the Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA), which allows teams responding to a crisis to quickly assess how women, men, girls and boys are affected differently by a crisis.

3. Raise our profile and influence for change in the UK

We are already recognised for our humanitarian work, expertise on women’s rights and presence in some of the hardest-hit communities. However, our reputation in the UK does not yet match the scale and quality of our impact, especially in the climate crisis. We must raise our profile and increase our influence, and with our partners, respond to challenges we see people facing all over the world.

By 2026 we will:

- Become a leading champion for women in times of crisis.
- Use our influence to motivate the UK government, companies, and others to better support women’s leadership, locally-led development, and humanitarian work.
- Make sure that women activists are heard loudest and acted on first in decision-making spaces.
- Advocate for a gender transformative approach to be at the heart of the UK’s approach to international development.

As a result, we expect:

- We will increase women’s rights activists’ influence over UK development policy and funding to better support local communities to put in place the solutions they define.
- We will empower people living in the UK to express their solidarity and be part of a connected movement to save lives, and defeat poverty and injustice.

4. Contribute to CARE’s work in over 100 countries to save lives, defeat poverty, and achieve social justice.

CARE International UK is a full member of the CARE confederation. Together, we work towards delivering on CARE’s Vision 2030, contributing to lasting large-scale impact in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. CARE’s six impact areas concentrate our expertise and drive progress towards our mission. CARE International UK raises funds to support work across all impact areas, with a particular focus on women’s voice and leadership in climate action and humanitarian crises.

Together with the CARE confederation, by 2030 our work will mean:

50 million women and girls experience greater gender equality

75 million people can better exercise their right to adequate food, water and nutrition.

We reach at least **50 million** people affected by major crises with humanitarian assistance.

50 million people can exercise their right to health, including 30 million women.

50 million women have more equitable access to, and control over, economic resources and opportunities.

25 million poor and marginalised people, particularly women and girls, strengthen their resilience to climate change.

5. Increase the diversity and sustainability of our income

CARE has a loyal, engaged supporter base of individuals and business in the UK. We are proud to be an innovative partner of the UK government and other institutional donors to achieve our mission. In this strategy period, we commit to reviewing the way we raise and manage funds to ensure we sustainably increase the resources available to support women leading in crisis and to scale up proven innovations. We'll look to diversify our voluntary income, including through multi-sectoral partnerships and new relationships with trusts and foundations, as well as testing new models to raise funds.

6. Become an anti-racist, diverse, inclusive and equitable organisation

We must reflect the changes we want to see in the world. That means becoming a more diverse and inclusive organisation that is actively anti-racist, and bases its decisions, funding, and relationships on feminist leadership principles. To achieve this, we will commit to a new set of feminist leadership principles, and reflect our equity, diversity, and inclusion goals in everything we do.

Virginia Remache (57) works and takes care of her agroecological garden, Chimborazo province, Ecuador.
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What We Stand For

Vision

A world of hope, inclusion, and social justice, where poverty is overcome, and all people live in dignity and security.

Mission

Save lives. Defeat poverty. Achieve social justice.

Focus

We cannot overcome poverty until everyone, everywhere has equal rights and opportunities – that's why women and girls are central to our work.

Above photo: Women from the Matu Masu Dubara Network of Tam in Diffa, Niger, with Aminatou Galadima, manager of one of our Women Lead in Emergencies pilot projects. Photo © Olliver Girard/CARE 2019

Font cover photo: Women from Empowering Women Workers in Bangladesh. Photo © Jorja Currington/CARE



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