

CARE International UK Strategy 2023 – 2026

Putting women and girls at the heart of our climate justice approach

Focus: Climate Justice



Climate Justice is about a future in which the poorest and most marginalised people have improved their wellbeing and can enjoy their human rights due to increased resilience to climate change, increased equality and a global temperature rise that is limited to 1.5°C.



Why do we prioritise Climate Justice?

Climate Justice seeks to address a fundamental inequity: the poorest and most marginalised people have done the least to cause the climate crisis, yet they are the ones that suffer most from its effects. It is estimated that **the poorest 50% of the world's population are only responsible for 7% of global carbon emissions.**¹ Urgent action is needed to reduce emissions, support those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and prioritise their voices in climate decision-making.

As the climate emergency grows, it is estimated that climate change may push an additional 132 million people into poverty by 2030. Women and girls will be especially affected, as they are disproportionately dependent on threatened natural resources, and often don't have as much say in decision-making as men and boys.

That's why CARE International UK (CIUK) will build on our extensive experience working on Climate Justice to make this one of the key priorities of our 2023-2026 Strategy. We will work in partnership with communities, local and women's rights organisations, and stakeholders worldwide, to integrate Women's Voice and Leadership approaches into our Climate Justice work and build an inclusive, gender-just and climate-resilient future.

¹ UNFCCC: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2021_04E.pdf

Phong, a farmer supported by CARE,
Vietnam
© CARE



Why are women particularly vulnerable to climate change?

- **Social and economic factors:** Women do most of the subsistence farming in developing countries, typically in charge of 80% of agricultural production, yet they only represent 2% of agricultural landowners. Because women and girls are more dependent on threatened natural resources for their livelihoods, they inevitably bear the greatest burden when faced by extreme weather events (e.g., droughts and floods).
- **Responsibility for household and care work:** Women often bear more responsibility for caring activities including gathering water and firewood. Climate change can make these tasks harder, and they can take longer, creating a heavier burden of work.
- **Limited free movement:** Where traditional social norms hinder women's ability to move at will within their community, women can face additional risks when they need to seek shelter or evacuate in the event of natural disasters like floods or hurricanes. Additionally, more men and boys move to urban centres for economic opportunities as livelihoods such as agriculture fail, increasing women's care burden in rural homes.
- **Displacement and gender-based violence:** During displacement, the risk of gender-based violence increases. Temporary housing like emergency shelters and refugee/migrant camps increase women and girls' vulnerability to violence while sleeping, washing, and bathing.
- **Discrimination and lack of representation:** Discriminatory social norms, policies and legislation mean that women are chronically under-represented in decision making and policy development at local, national and international levels. This means laws and policies may not adequately address women and children's needs.

Putting Women's Voice and Leadership at the centre of our Climate Justice work:

All people, of all genders, ages and abilities, have a fundamental right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. Yet we know that many people are excluded from exercising power. This particularly affects women, girls and marginalised groups (including people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities). From a climate perspective this means that some of the people most affected by climate change are systematically ignored and frequently excluded from discussions about how to mitigate, respond, or adapt to climate change. This can be made worse if those women are also facing discrimination based on other factors such as race, ethnicity, age or disability.

The number of women representatives in national and global climate negotiating bodies is **approximately half the number of men**². Women-led and women's rights organisations receive only small amounts of climate finance despite the leading role they play in community climate action. Women also risk being left out of opportunities in the transition to a green economy unless governments and the private sector take action to address the specific barriers they face.

To address gender inequality in climate action, we must support the voice and leadership of women, girls and marginalised people at all levels. Their leadership is crucial for advancing climate justice.

UNFCCC: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2021_04E.pdf

A women working in the fields
Zimbabwe
© Ngonidzashé Munemo/Charmaine
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How does CARE work with communities impacted by climate change?

CARE has over two decades experience working with partners, including local organisations and women's rights organisations, to pioneer inclusive approaches to [Community-based Adaptation](#). **CARE's approaches centre the voices and needs of communities themselves and ensure that the people experiencing the effects of climate change have the power when identifying the problems and climate solutions which work for them.**

CARE has extensive experience in both development and humanitarian contexts. In a world where climatic disasters are more and more common, our ability to work across areas from anticipatory action, adaptation and mitigation to direct humanitarian response means that **we are there for those living the impacts of the climate crisis, where ever they are and however they need.**

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



We aim for transformative impact, employing [CARE's Gender Equality Framework](#) in our programmes to address the root causes of Climate Injustice. This involves not only changing community practices but also reforming the systems, policies, laws, norms, and institutions responsible for climate injustice. Our approach prioritises:

- **Putting communities at the centre of climate planning, adaptation, mitigation, and response:** CIUK works in service to and solidarity with local partners and communities – in particular, women-led organisations and women activists – working collaboratively on climate adaptation and disaster risk management actions. Going forward CIUK will ensure local organisations have increased decision making power over resources.
- **Using proven, sector leading tools:** CARE has tested new approaches, which are now proven to support communities to plan adaptation options, map risks and vulnerabilities, and respond. Tools such as the Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA), Community Adaptation Action Planning (CAAP), and wide use of Climate Information Services (CIS) can be adapted to different contexts and provide evidence based frameworks for programming.
- **Centring inclusive governance and accountability:** Large-scale environmental change requires institutional, government and corporate policy shifts. CARE's extensive experience in inclusive governance means that we have developed tools and approaches which support systems-wide change. Social accountability tools like Community Score Cards are combined with work targeting institutional actors and support for social movements and collectives to influence systems, policy and practice.
- **Transforming ourselves:** CIUK is also committed to environmental responsibility in our work. We are in the process of transforming ourselves through adoption of CARE's minimum targets on reducing absolute operational emissions against a designated baseline, onboarding a waste management strategy across offices and programmes, and carrying out responsible programming that promotes good environmental practices.

What does the new Strategy mean for CIUK's work in practice?

CARE works with local partners to support communities to anticipate and prepare for climate disasters, adapt the way they farm and interact with the natural world, and advocate to decision-makers to stop climate change and mitigate its effects. Across all areas, we support women to lead in their communities, and at national and global levels. **Over the strategy period, 2023-2026 CIUK will work to:**

1 Reduce the impact of climate-linked natural disasters by preparing in advance:

CARE's work with climate vulnerable communities includes adaptation actions which are taken in advance of a predicted disaster to reduce the worst impacts of climate hazards and lessen the humanitarian burden. Early actions are often referred to as 'no regrets' actions which provide positive benefits to vulnerable communities even if the hazard doesn't materialise. Anticipatory action goes one step further and takes place when specific triggers or danger levels are met for a predicted hazard.

CARE's Global Shelter Team, hosted by CIUK, is working with the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to improve flood and cyclone preparedness in Southern Africa. Tropical cyclones and associated flooding are becoming more frequent, more destructive, and less predictable. The project helps communities plan for these events by designing emergency shelters appropriate for the context, using long-range weather forecasts, and pre-positioning emergency supplies like tents and cooking equipment to respond quickly to displacement.

2 Work with communities to protect ecosystems and support sustainable livelihoods:

CARE collaborates with partners to promote sustainable natural resource management, striving for locally led solutions that balance livelihoods with ecosystem preservation. This includes supporting sustainable agriculture and small-scale farmers through initiatives like farmer field business schools and climate-smart approaches.

CARE is leading a UK Government-funded project in Bangladesh (2023-2027) to collaboratively design and implement sustainable livelihoods and infrastructure with communities living in proximity to ecologically critical areas. This project supports locally managed ecosystems which have positive outcomes for both people and the environment, such as sustainable fishing and mangrove protection to ensure homes are shielded from storms.

3 Ensure inclusive management of natural resources, and address conflict:

When communities affected by climate change find that they have fewer resources, competition can cause conflict and often the most vulnerable or marginalised are further excluded from accessing and managing resources. CARE tools like the CVCA and CAAP work to ensure the inclusive governance of natural resources, and offer ways to ensure all people have a voice in decision-making and planning. Furthermore, CARE works with local, national and global authorities at multiple levels to make sure that the policies, laws and institutions ensure inclusive access to and control over resources.

CARE's GENRE+ project in Mali – funded by the UK Government – strengthens resilience by supporting inclusive governance around natural resource management, supporting local conflict prevention and management mechanisms, and addressing the harmful gender norms which prevent women from participating in Natural Resource Management. The project integrates peacebuilding approaches into CARE's Climate tools and approaches. Since the project started in 2021 we have seen improvements in women's participation in decision-making and an increase in the number of women in leadership positions.

4 Advocate for action to mitigate the climate crisis and support adaptation efforts:

CIUK will hold the UK Government and other power holders to account for addressing the impacts of the climate crisis, calling for increased financing for the global south to mitigate and adapt, and address the loss and damage felt by communities all over the world. We work with women activists and leaders to ensure they have a voice and impact on decision makers, and we call for funding to reach marginalised women and girls, including women's rights and women-led organisations.

In 2020, before the UK's COP26 Presidency, our 'She Leads in Crisis' campaign urged the UK to lead by:

- 1. Advocating for national plans to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees - and support women to lead and shape these plans**
- 2. Establish an ambitious net zero plan**
- 3. Ensure climate finance reaches women and women's organisations on the frontlines of the climate crisis.**

We highlighted these demands through events, marches, rallies, and a joint letter signed by 58 organisations, activists and MPs.

5 Climate change mitigation:

CARE also works with communities on climate change mitigation. This helps to reduce emissions and can help to address environmental degradation. By facilitating linkages with the voluntary carbon market and generating the highest quality carbon credits, these projects can promote scale and sustainability and ensure that local communities receive a financial return which they can invest in further climate change mitigation projects.

Through its peer-to-peer lending platform Lendwithcare and its own offsetting policy CARE has provided low-income households in India with improved cookstoves. As well as reducing carbon emissions and rates of deforestation, the improved cookstoves have had a range of positive economic, social and health outcomes such as better family health through a decrease in respiratory illnesses, less expenditure on fuel, and a reduction in the amount of time women and girls spend on collecting firewood. The project will be generating highest quality carbon credits from 2024 onwards, providing a financial return for local communities.

This is Maria Leonarda Xiquin, together with her husband Mario Salonob Qit, they produce carrots, Guatemala
© deBode/CARE





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: Yeo Nakoni, Ivory Coast in her cabbage field. Photo © CARE



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