

CARE International UK Strategy 2023 – 2026

Towards equitable partnerships and local leadership

Focus: Local Leadership



CARE International UK's Strategy 2023-26 focuses on local leadership through equitable partnerships with local partners and communities. We recognise 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 to where it belongs – into the hands of the communities we serve.



CARE's definition of partnership

At the heart of all partnerships for CARE is our goal of addressing poverty and social injustice (particularly gender inequality and unequal power dynamics). Partnerships are purposeful relationships based on mutual trust, equality and learning, with an agreed vision, clear accountability for all parties, and which engage the complementary strengths of the actors involved to collaborate on specific objectives, challenges or opportunities in ways that achieve greater impact that they could achieve alone.

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Over the strategy period, CIUK will endeavour to increase the proportion of our work implemented in partnership with local organisations and in doing so, we aim to ensure that local organisations have the same access to decision-making and resources as other established partners such as INGOs and UN Agencies. In particular, we will increase our partnerships with Women-Led Organisations (WLOs) and Women's Rights Organisations (WROs), in line with our focus on Women's Voice and Leadership. At the same time, we will put local communities in the driving seat of programme design and implementation through our community-led models, such as Women Lead in Emergencies.

We will work with CARE country offices and other CARE member partners (CMPs) to achieve this and 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.

Hawa Abdalnabi, East Darfur, Sudan
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Who we work with

CIUK seeks greater gender equality for people of all genders. CIUK and CARE country offices work with women, trans, non-binary, LGBTQI+ and disabled people and those affected by discrimination to promote gender equality.

In order to reach these people, CIUK and the CARE country offices partner with WROs, WLOs and local organisations and networks.

CIUK defines **Women's Rights Organisations (WROs)** as those with an explicit purpose of advancing women's rights or gender equality and **Women-Led Organisations (WLOs)** as any non-governmental, not-for profit and non-political organisation where two-thirds of its board (including the Chair) and management staff/volunteers (including the Executive Director) are female, focusing on women and girls as a primary target of programming.

Why are we shifting power and resources to affected communities?

For far too long, local organisations have been seen as less capable and working with them was considered risky. In reality, local organisations have a deep contextual knowledge and already have significant skills and expertise. As CIUK, we need to improve the way we work with local partners in identifying their support requirements.

At CIUK, we seek to enter a new phase where **we recognise the power that we hold, and intentionally give power, resources and space to local organisations and communities**, in particular to WLOs and women activists, so they can shape the decisions, debates and programmes that affect their lives.

For these reasons CIUK makes the commitment that by 2026:

50% of our programmes will follow a new business model for equitable partnerships with WLOs, WROs and local organisations.

At least **25%** of our institutional funding will go to WLOs, WROs and local organisations.

We aim to base **all** our programming on the feminist principles of mutuality, trust, respect, accountability and equality.

What does this mean for CIUK's work in practice?

We aim to transform CIUK from playing a directive role to working in service to, and solidarity with, local partners and communities, to support them to achieve the impact they define. We will also use our position to influence the UK aid sector and the CARE Confederation to move more quickly in the same direction. We envisage that this will mean that CIUK plays a convener and broker role in the future.

How will we change how we work?

CIUK, working with the CARE country offices, will work towards more equitable partnerships with local organisations.

- We will prioritise working with local organisations in all contexts.
- We will tailor CIUK/CARE's role to providing the service needed by local WROs, WLOs and CSOs.
- Immediately implement a policy where all partners can recover the administrative and support costs necessary to implement a humanitarian or development programme under FCDO-funded projects. This will also improve the ability of local organisations to maintain experience and expertise acquired through one programme for future programmes and thus, increase their sustainability.
- We will work with partners to mutually identify capacity gaps and how to address them during the programme.

CARE distributes food to venerable people in Afghanistan
© CARE



CIUK, working with the CARE country offices, will increase the participation of affected communities in the programme design and implementation and improve accountability mechanisms.

- When we start the design of a project, we will ensure that local partners and communities are represented equitably in the process. We will work with the CARE country offices to improve community participation in project design and implementation. This will contribute to determining the role that CIUK will play in the implementation of the programme. This role will vary according to the nature of the project, the context or the donor.
- We have developed proven tools and approaches over the past years (Women Lead in Emergencies, Shelter Self Recovery, Rapid Gender Analysis, Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment) that put local communities in the driving seat of programme design and implementation.
- We will ensure these approaches are used throughout our programming and we will continue disseminating them throughout the sector.

We will work with the CARE Confederation to achieve this objective

- We will fully leverage the innovations that other CMPs are leading to increase local leadership, for example working with other CMPs on the future role of CARE country offices and with CMPS who are already leading on feminist funding.

CARE's local partner organisation, Live & Learn Environmental Education, conducting an earthquake and tsunami drill with a school in the Solomon Islands.
© Charlie Damon/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: CARE partner working with displaced persons and the evacuees from Aleppo, Syria. Photo © CARE/Shafak



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